

D E L I A,

A

P A T H E T I C

A N D

I N T E R E S T I N G

T A L E.

*Virtue when distress'd, can smile on Death,  
And as a friend embrace it.*

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*Yes, thou shalt find  
Women, when armed with Virtue, know no fear  
But guilt and shame.*

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I N F O U R V O L U M E S

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V O L . I I I .

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L O N D O N ,

Printed for WILLIAM LANE, Leadenhall Street,  
1790.





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D E L I A.

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L E T T E R L.

*Lady Harriot Bloomfield to Lady Wharton,*

IN CONTINUATION.

**D**ELIA just then entered.

“ We have been speaking of you  
“ my love,” said Lady Bloomfield. “ Tell  
“ us with your natural candour, are our  
“ conjectures well grounded—Have you  
“ rejected Lord Hermont’s addresses ?”

“ Why, my dear Madam,—did you  
“ wish me not to reject them.”

“ Undoubtedly, my dear,—his charac-  
“ ter—his birth—his person—his fortune  
“ —are all equally unexceptionable. Is  
“ it not then natural that your friends

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should

“ should wish to see you united to a person so adapted to render you happy.”

“ My friends will never render me happy,” replied she, “ by banishing me from them. I have no wish ungratified, whilst blest with their approbation and protection.”

“ But my dear,” replied Lady Bloomfield, “ what could be your motives for refusing Lord Hermont ?”

“ Because I feel an insurmountable repugnance to the idea of an union with him. I acknowledge him to be every way worthy, but indeed I can never—”

“ Hold !” interrupted I, encouraged by the excessive reluctance she expressed, to urge her more warmly than at first I should have ventured to do—“ make no rash resolutions.—Your father has fixed his wishes on this union : it was on this account he engaged me to come hither. I consulted with your friends previous to his Lordship’s visit ; but ever attentive to your happiness, they feared lest a consciousness of his sentiments, might  
“ involve

“ involve you in a disagreeable embarrass-  
“ ment, and concealed his application to  
“ Mr. Bloomfield, through a regard to  
“ your delicacy. Perhaps if they had  
“ pursued another method, and exerted  
“ the influence of parental authority, they  
“ might not have experienced this mortify-  
“ ing disappointment. I may be thought  
“ to express my sentiments too warmly,  
“ but when I reflect on the vexation this  
“ affair will occasion Mr. Bloomfield, I  
“ own, I am not sufficiently mistress of my  
“ temper.”

“ I am not,” returned Delia, “ insen-  
“ sible or ungrateful for the obligations I  
“ owe my friends ; I have but one method  
“ of returning them—and if the sacrifice  
“ of my peace—”

“ No, no ! my dear child,” cried Mrs.  
Bloomfield, whilst she flew to her and pres-  
sed her to her bosom, “ that would be the  
“ way to render us all wretched ! Lady  
“ Harriot, I wonder how you can speak  
“ so austere !—It is the most barbarous  
“ thing in the world to force the inclina-



“ tions of a poor girl. I am sure I shall  
“ never forget the persecutions I under-  
“ went in my youth! My nephew can’t  
“ think of such a thing—but I hope he  
“ will come to-morrow, and then I shall  
“ speak to him on the subject myself.”

We were called to supper.

“ Come, my love,” said Lady Bloom-  
field, “ if you cannot like Lord Hermont,  
“ you know the indulgence of your friends  
“ too well, to imagine they will endeavour  
“ to over-rule your inclinations: but per-  
“ haps your sentiments may hereafter  
“ change.”

Delia excused herself from coming to  
supper. Lord Archer did not ask for her  
—but looked as if he wished to enquire.  
Lady Bloomfield told Sir Richard, she had  
got the head-ach and was gone to bed.

Immediately after supper I went to her  
apartment.

“ Since your connection with this fa-  
“ mily, my dear Lady Harriot,” said she,  
“ your generous tenderness, your mater-  
“ nal solicitude for my happiness, have  
“ left

“ left me no room to regret the loss I sustained by the death of a parent, whom I cannot remember. May I not now hope you will act consistently with the indulgence you have hitherto shewn me, and be my advocate with my father?”

“ I need not now,” returned I, “ avail myself of professions, to assure you of an affection, of which you cannot entertain a doubt. As far as my influence extends, you may rely on my good offices—but indeed I wish you would consider this matter a little more seriously. Reflect on your situation—the heiress of a princely fortune—the last surviving hope of an antient and respectable family—all its views and wishes directed to you—your friends expect you to marry—it is a duty you owe them.—Can you then determine to disappoint those views—to frustrate those expectations, without being able to alledge in your vindication, any more rational plea than the childish pretext, of a disinclination to marriage.—Or may they not

B 3

“ expect

“ expect the sacrifice of that disinclination  
“ from a mind so nobly impartial, and so  
“ generously disinterested. For the pre-  
“ sent, however, I will endeavour to  
“ soften the resentment of your father ; but  
“ I shall never again interfere on a similar  
“ occasion. Even your aunt and grand-  
“ mother, though affected by your tears  
“ and submission, expressed before your  
“ entrance, great surprize and some re-  
“ sentment at your conduct. Lady Bloom-  
“ field still hopes your sentiments will  
“ alter.”

“ Never !” interrupted she, with great  
emotion. “ Why was I born the heiress  
“ of a noble fortune—the hope of an an-  
“ tient family !”

“ Indeed, my dear,” returned I, smiling,  
“ these are rather whimsical subjects of  
“ complaint.—But I again repeat it—your  
“ friends expect you to marry—and if  
“ hereafter you should be powerfully so-  
“ licited in favour of a person less worthy  
“ and amiable than Lord Hermont, will  
“ you not with reason repent your present  
“ rejection

“ rejection of him. Be persuaded then—  
“ recall him before it is too late; it will  
“ be easily done—let Lady Bloomfield  
“ write a card in the morning.”

“ Hold, Lady Harriot,” said she, “ give  
“ me time for a moment’s reflection.”

I trembled lest I had gone too far.

“ There is much—but too much weight  
“ in your arguments,” said she, after a  
pause. “ Your remonstrances are strong;  
“ but my own feelings are yet more pow-  
“ erful. Can you,” continued she, look-  
ing down and deeply blushing as she spoke;  
“ can you, who are acquainted with the  
“ secret of my heart, be surprized at my  
“ averfeness to marriage?”

“ I hoped, my dear,” replied I, “ you  
“ had overcome this romantic way of think-  
“ ing. What! because you have been  
“ disappointed in a juvenile attachment—  
“ because a giddy youth has evinced him-  
“ self unworthy your tenderness—must  
“ you immure yourself in solitude, and  
“ renounce all intercourse with mankind?  
“ Are there no other men in the world as



“ estimable and amiable, as he to whom  
“ you would make this sacrifice?—A sa-  
“ crifice which I hoped your sense and  
“ spirit would long ere this have rendered  
“ unnecessary.”

“ You are deceived,” replied she, “ if  
“ you imagine me still attached to Bloom-  
“ field. But surely it is not wonderful  
“ that of an affection so deeply engraven  
“ on my heart, some melancholy traces  
“ should remain.—Other men may be in-  
“ finitely more estimable; but none, I ac-  
“ knowledge, ever appeared so amiable in  
“ my eyes. However, I think I am be-  
“ ginning to forget him. You see,” con-  
“ tinued she, wiping off a tear, and forcing a  
“ smile, “ I can now speak of him without  
“ emotion. I shall endeavour to think of  
“ marriage with less reluctance; and per-  
“ haps at some future period, I may be  
“ able to fulfil the wishes of my friends  
“ without wounding the feelings of my  
“ heart! How unfortunate was my ex-  
“ cursion to town!

“ It

“It is true,” said I, availing myself of an idea that just then glanced across my mind.—“I foresaw the consequences of your appearing publicly in the world; and this will explain to you a part of my conduct, which I am convinced must have appeared enigmatical. You have often been surprized at my wishing you to remain at Bloomfield. But I knew your sentiments and did not wish to see you precipitated in your choice, though it has always been my desire and my expectation, to see you married—It would have sounded like flattery, to have told my dear Delia, that whenever she appeared in public—her charms would have ensured a train of admirers, and consequently a train of vexations.”

“You have always been kindly attentive to my peace,” replied she, “and though I may sometimes be at a loss to what motives to attribute your actions, I never doubted that they proceeded from the most noble—I am not ungrateful,” continued she, pressing my hand,

hand, "and can never forget the obligations I owe you!"

Poor deluded girl! how little art thou acquainted with the nature of these obligations! Her unremitted acknowledgements stung me to the heart! I left her abruptly.

As I was retiring to my apartment, I met my son in the gallery—he followed me into my dressing-room, and flinging himself on a sofa, enquired with affected negligence, "What company we had at the Dean's?"

"None but Lord Hermont and Wentworth," said I, —but, continued I, smiling, "I suppose Delia has made you her confidant."

"Her confidant!" repeated he in great agitation, "No,—but I suppose"—"Oh! indeed you must have possessed very little penetration not to have perceived it."

The entrance of my woman prevented any farther conversation. He retired in evident discomposure.

You

You will ask me—why by concealing from Lord Archer, Delia's refusal of Lord Hermont—by inducing him to fancy him her favoured lover, I have cruelly involved him in unnecessary anxiety?—It is not unnecessary—to-morrow must decide his fate—and it is the energy of his distress that will most effectually influence his judge.—It is true, I might defer this eclairsissement—but what would it avail?—Bloomfield is still dear to Delia—but in an affection so deeply rooted—a tenderness that has withstood near four years absence and his imagined falsehood—what alteration would a few weeks, or even months, produce? Whilst I appeared most warmly solicitous to urge the suit of his rival, I have artfully pleaded the cause of my son, by convincing her that the plans she has formed for a single life are chimerical. Why do I thus tremble with apprehension!—Ah when his fate awaits its decision from her generosity and compassion, can I doubt the event!



Wednesday morning.

The inquietude of my mind permits me not to rest. What horrid visions have pursued me through the gloom of night! Methought I beheld my son expiring of a wound, he had received from Lord Hermont.—Methought, when I flung myself beside his bleeding body, he turned from me with abhorrence, and called me his murderers! — Delia, wild and distracted upbraided me with my falsehood!—In inconceivable horror I started from the dreadful delirium—all was hushed and silent—but the voice of conscience! She it is that appals my soul with those terrifying visions.

The sun shines with unusual lustre—the happy birds salute the chearful rays of the morning.—I will go and endeavour to shake this oppressive weight from my spirits.

I wandered through the garden and the park.—The sweet serenity that seemed diffused over every object, composed in some measure the agitation of my spirits. As the hour of breakfast approached, I bent my steps towards the house, and in the garden,

garden, at the turn of one of the alleys, was met by my son. I perceived by the disorder of his dress, that he had not been in bed all night, and his countenance was expressive of the deepest despair.

“ I did not expect,” said he, assuming a more chearful air at my approach, “ to have had the pleasure of meeting your Ladyship so early; however, I am pleased with an opportunity of consulting you on an affair, which for some time past has entirely engrossed my attention.”

I was apprehensive he was on the point of making me his confidant of his passion—a secret, I by no means wished to be entrusted with.

“ I have always,” resumed he, taking my hand, “ found you the tenderest and most indulgent parent; and I flatter myself, you will not now oppose a resolution on which the peace of your son is absolutely dependent.”

“ Speak,” cried I, “ speak, my dear son! Have I a wish—have I a feeling,  
“ which

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“ Speak,” cried I, “ speak, my dear son! Have I a wish—have I a feeling, which



“ which I would not sacrifice to your  
“ happiness?”

“ I know your generosity,” replied he;  
“ but I dread your tenderness. After so  
“ long an absence, can you consent to  
“ another separation?”

I now began to conceive the nature of  
his scheme, and as I hoped to prevent its  
execution, I became more composed.

“ Another separation!” said I, “ on  
“ what account? What misfortunes ne-  
“ cessitate my son to abandon his mother?  
“ to renounce his native country?”

“ No misfortune,” replied he; “ but I  
“ am weary of inactivity. Can I thus al-  
“ ways contentedly skulk in obscurity!—  
“ What ties have I to my native country?  
“ Without influence to maintain the dig-  
“ nity of my birth—without fortune to  
“ support the antient splendour of my  
“ house—gladly would I divest myself of  
“ this title—this shadow of nobility, which  
“ serves only to render my poverty con-  
“ spicuous.—To embark immediately for  
“ the Indies, is my fixed determination.

“ There,

“ There, if I do not find an honourable  
“ grave, I may acquire advantages, which  
“ will enable me to return without blush-  
“ ing to my country, and appear in it in a  
“ light which will neither wound my own  
“ pride, nor reflect a disgrace on the lustre  
“ of my house.”

“ You are not now,” returned I, “ of  
“ an age to be controuled : and if you  
“ are not united to me by the bonds of af-  
“ fection—of those of duty I wish not to  
“ avail myself.”

At breakfast every one remarked my distress, and Lord Archer’s gloominess. Delia’s eyes asked a thousand questions. She followed me to my apartment.

“ Oh, Madam,” cried she, “ have you  
“ discovered the secret cause of my bro-  
“ ther’s uneasiness ?”

“ My dear,” replied I, “ all your bro-  
“ ther thinks proper to reveal to me, is a  
“ resolution he has formed for embarking  
“ immediately for the Indies.”

“ And have you consented to this mea-  
“ sure ?”

“ I have ;

“ I have ; he told me it was essential to  
“ his peace. Every other consideration  
“ vanishes when that is at stake ; and if it  
“ can conduce to his happiness, I am con-  
“ tent to be miserable.”

“ Oh,” cried she, dissolving in tears,  
“ you must not be miserable—Lord Archer  
“ must not desert us !—But what are his  
“ motives ? Can you not form any con-  
“ jecture ?”

“ Indeed,” said I, “ it strongly recurs  
“ to me, that before your arrival in town,  
“ he used to be engaged with a set of noble  
“ foreigners ; I heard it insinuated, there  
“ was deep play—it is by no means im-  
“ probable, that he has lost some large  
“ sum, which he may find it difficult to  
“ raise.—I now recollect, that he has se-  
“ veral private conferences with a suspi-  
“ cious looking old man.—If by any im-  
“ prudence of this nature, he had been  
“ obliged to mortgage his estate more  
“ deeply, to a young man of his high  
“ spirit, nothing can be more natural than  
“ his present resolution.—Yet I never knew  
“ him

“ him addicted to gaming, and perhaps I  
“ injure him by the supposition.”

“ I own,” replied she, “ it appears to  
“ me a very reasonable one, and greatly as  
“ I am convinced he is averse from ga-  
“ ming, there are many situations in which  
“ it is impossible for a man of fashion to  
“ avoid it entirely. To give up our incli-  
“ nations when they interfere with those  
“ of our companions, is a sacrifice which  
“ politeness requires of its votaries. Many  
“ circumstances concur in favour of your  
“ opinion. You cannot forget his melan-  
“ choly when I was in Dublin, and the ill-  
“ ness that succeeded it. On our arrival  
“ here, he recovered his spirits and was  
“ even uncommonly chearful until he re-  
“ ceived a letter (about seven or eight days  
“ since) which at the time threw him into  
“ visible agitation; nor has he since re-  
“ covered from his dejection. I wish  
“ we may be right in our conjectures.  
“ Surely from an embarrassment of this na-  
“ ture, it would not be difficult to disen-  
“ tangle him.”

“ Indeed



“ Indeed, my dear, it would — for  
“ though I doubt not Mr. Bloomfield’s in-  
“ clination to save my son, I already owe  
“ but too many obligations to his genero-  
“ sity, and cannot consent—”

“ Oh Madam,” interrupted she, “ how  
“ can you speak in this strain? The obli-  
“ gations are entirely on the side of his fa-  
“ mily.—But if you wish to conceal this  
“ transaction from the knowledge of my  
“ father, surely we might raise a large sum  
“ on our jewels ; mine are at present of no  
“ use to me, and I shall be of age before I  
“ I shall want them. You shall repay me  
“ at some future period,” continued she,  
smiling ; but we must hide this affair from  
“ my brother ; his troublesome delicacy  
“ would revolt at the idea of an obligation  
“ of this nature, even from his sister.”

“ No, my amiable daughter,” cried I,  
embracing her, “ my generous friend ! you  
“ shall not part with your jewels—we may  
“ possibly devise some other method. But  
“ though my entreaties have been ineffec-  
“ tual, yours may, perhaps, be more per-

“suasive.

“suasive.—Go then, insinuate yourself into  
“his confidence, and let me owe my son  
“to your friendship!”

The unsuspecting innocent, duped no less by her own generosity than by my artifices, fell into the snare I had prepared for her!—She went—the event answered my expectations—my son declared his passion.—I know not the particulars of the interview, but she returned in violent perturbation, and he quitted the house in despair. As Mr. Bloomfield is here, I have not time to write minute circumstances. Suffice it to say, that after a painful conflict with her feelings, Delia has recalled my son, and all my wishes will be gratified.

She spent the day in her own apartment. I with great difficulty prevented her grandmother and her aunt from visiting her, until the tumult of her mind subsided.

I insinuated to them with apparent confusion and distress, that her present disorder and her refusal of Lord Hermont, were the consequences of a mutual partiality between her and my son—but the terms in which I expressed

expressed myself, were so equivocal, that thin  
 were they even repeated to Delia, I could sent  
 easily persuade her they had been misinter- C  
 preted. The idea was probable—it gained first  
 immediate credit, and ensured their con- snar  
 sent. Lord Archer has been extremely and  
 approved by all the family; but his being capa  
 preferred by their idol, would be in itself in t  
 a sufficient recommendation abstracted from Pain  
 every other consideration.—and the son of t  
 your Harriot had in Mr. Bloomfield the ting  
 warmest advocate with his daughter. tituo  
 hear

Ought I not now to triumph in the suc  
 cess of my artifices!—Yet I cannot—my wor  
 apprehension is continually on the rack  
 and I dread lest some unforeseen even  
 should at once defeat my purposes, and in  
 volve me in misery and confusion. Delia's  
 excessive reluctance, which, notwithstanding  
 her efforts to dissemble it, appears bu  
 too palpably, strikes a chilly terror to my  
 heart, and I cannot forbear anticipating  
 some fatal disappointment to my wishes!—  
 Were the indissoluble knot once tied,  
 think

nicat

that I should bid adieu to those distressful  
sensations.

Oh Maria! in what a labyrinth has my  
first deviation from the paths of truth en-  
snared me!—Why did I, quit that plain  
and easy way which lies open to the meanest  
capacity, voluntarily to entangle myself  
in this inextricable wilderness of deceit!  
Pain and terror, the inseparable companions  
of fraud, pursue my soul with unremit-  
ting severity; and Delia's effusions of gra-  
titude and tenderness, are daggers to a  
heart too keenly conscious of its own un-  
worthiness.

HARRIOT BLOOMFIELD.

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## LETTER LI.

*Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.*

Wednesday noon.

OH, my Henrietta, why are you not  
with me! I have much to commu-  
nicate, yet know not where to begin. My  
thoughts



thoughts are all confusion and perplexity—a thousand ideas rush precipitately through my mind—yet the only strong impression I retain is, that I am unhappy.

Lord Archer—you wished us to love each other—your desire is in part accomplished—he does indeed love me with the tenderest affection. Why did I ever meet him? Or why cannot I return an attachment so sincere and so fervent?

In my last letter I remarked his melancholy—but you may conceive my distress, when Lady Harriot this morning informed me, whilst her eyes streamed with tears of maternal sorrow, that he had formed a determination of embarking immediately for the Indies. You know my esteem and admiration of his amiable character—you know I love him with the fondness of a sister—judge then, how greatly I was shocked at this unexpected intelligence. I enquired into the motives of this sudden resolution, but she told me he obstinately persisted in disguising them from her, and entreated me to go to him and exert my influence

fluence to induce him to divulge them. I saw him go into the garden, and traced him from thence into the park, where he entered the temple.

I found him reclining on a Sopha; his air and dress were disordered, but his countenance was expressive of the deepest dejection—the most violent perturbation.

He started when I approached him.

“ Let me not disturb you,” said I, endeavouring to conceal my emotion.

He made me no answer, and I seated myself beside him.—He turned from me.

“ Oh Archer!” said I, no longer able to repress my sorrow—“ is this the affection you have so often expressed for me! Why am I thus treated by my brother?”

“ I know not, Madam,” replied he, coldly, “ how I have been so unfortunate as to offend you.”

“ Offend me!—you do indeed offend me!—but I will not give way to resentment.—Let me rather with the tenderness of a sister, conjure my dear brother

“ to

“ to tell me why I have forfeited his esteem  
“ and confidence !”

“ Leave me, Delia !” cried he, in a tone  
scarce intelligible—“ you have not—you  
“ never can forfeit my esteem—my—but  
“ I entreat—I conjure you to leave me !”

“ I will not leave you,” said I, sur-  
prized and terrified at his emotion. “ In-  
“ deed I can never leave you, till I know  
“ the source of your distress—the power-  
“ ful motives which impel you to re-  
“ nounce your friends—to abandon your  
“ country !”

“ You flatter me,” replied he, in a softer  
tone of voice, “ that I am possessed of  
“ your friendship. Let me still indulge  
“ the soothing idea of being dear to you—  
“ let me hope, that though exiled from  
“ your sight forever, your prayers and  
“ wishes will attend me—these are the  
“ only consolations in your power to be-  
“ stow—cease then to torture me with im-  
“ portunities, which, from you are ir-  
“ resistible !”

“ Gracious



“ Gracious heaven,” cried I, “ what  
“ have you done ! Surely error is excu-  
“ sable in youth.”

“ Error !” interrupted he, “ I have  
“ indeed erred widely from the paths of  
“ peace ! Oh Delia !”—he could not pro-  
ceed—he hid his face with his handker-  
chief—my tears flowed fast—he again en-  
treated me to leave him.

“ I go, my Lord,” said I, rising and  
counterfeiting a resentment I felt not ;  
“ forgive this disagreeable intrusion, and  
“ if I have been too busily importunate,  
“ let the motives which excite my curiosity,  
“ extenuate its impertinence. I ought to  
“ thank you for this unkindness—it will  
“ enable me to support a separation, which,  
“ if you had treated me with your usual  
“ tenderness, I should have regretted but  
“ too deeply.”

“ Hold ! cruel Delia,” cried he, ar-  
dently catching my hand, “ I cannot bear  
“ your displeasure ! I am already too  
“ wretched !”



“ Why then,” replied I, “ am I treated  
“ with this unkind reserve? Have done  
“ with these ungenerous concealments, and  
“ convince me by your confidence of the  
“ reality of your affection.”

“ The reality of my affection ! Can you  
“ not read it in the conflicts of my soul—  
“ what banishes me from my friends—  
“ from my country !”

The violence of his agitation permitted him not to proceed ;—but I had heard enough ! Oh, my friend, what were my sensations at that moment. My head whirled round—I sunk breathless on the sofa—every object swam before my sight, my heart ceased to palpitate, and I felt an icy chillness creeping through my veins.

Archer flung himself on his knees before me ; his exclamations were wild and passionate—but the confusion of my ideas prevented me from attending to them. I was roused from my stupefaction by the sound of voices, yet the power of utterance was still denied me, and I could only point to the door that opens into the wilderness.

“ Yes,

“ Yes, I will go,” said he, starting on his feet—“ my Delia—my sister, that endearing name at least, you will allow me! May heaven diffuse its blessings! May angels guard you! My beloved, my lovely friend—farewell—forever!”

He pressed my hands to his lips—they were wet with his tears—and rushed precipitately into the wilderness.

He was scarcely gone, when my father and Sir Richard entered. They were shocked and surprized at the situation in which they found me. I said I had been seized with a dizziness, but hoped the air would refresh me.

They both supported me, for I trembled so violently that I could not stand.

My father had not yet been at home, but was met by my grandfather in the park, and had given his horse to a servant.—As we slowly proceeded homewards, we were met in the garden by Lady Harriot. You may easily conceive her anxiety when she saw me, but she repressed her curiosity until we were alone.

“ Oh Delia,” cried she, “ have you  
“ then discovered!—must I lose my child!”

Until relieved by a violent flood of tears,  
I could not answer her.

“ Keep me not in this dreadful suspense,”  
resumed she, “ what is the cause?”

“ I am the fatal cause,” interrupted I,  
“ Lord Archer loves me!”

Her surprize at this intelligence was  
equal to what my own had been, and her  
emotions were almost as powerful.

“ Oh, my unhappy son!” exclaimed she,  
in a voice interrupted by tears and sobs,”

“ why did I recall you to your country!

“ —I no longer oppose your resolution—

“ yet how can I support the idea of an eter-

“ nal separation!—Forgive me, Delia, I

“ mean not to reproach you; but you,

“ who have never experienced, cannot

“ possibly conceive the exquisite sensations

“ of maternal tenderness! I would not af-

“ flict you—restrain your tears—your in-

“ effectual compassion—I am not so in-

“ fatuated as to hope—have you not al-

“ ready rejected Lord Hermont—so greatly

“ his



“ his superior in fortune—what then—generous—sympathetic and disinterested as you are, what then can I expect for my son !”

“ Wound me not,” cried I, “ by these partial—these unmerited praises—I feel I can never deserve them—and my sympathy can lead me no farther than to regret the misfortune, which my generosity is too weak to prevent !”

“ Why do you reproach me with Lord Hermont’s superior fortune ? No elevation of rank, no accumulation of riches can counterbalance the excellencies and the virtues of your son. Ah, if my heart were mistress of its own election, how soon would I convince you, that it is not fordid or mercenary !”

Our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of my father. I retired to my apartment, and throwing myself on my bed, indulged the agony of my soul.

Advise me, my friend ;—but my doom will be determined before I can receive your answer ! Can I suffer Lord Archer to pursue



ful his resolution? Must I return the tenderness of my friend—my benefactress, by banishing from her presence, a son she adores! Can I be cruelly inattentive to his happiness, whose society and friendship have so greatly contributed to mine? Bloomfield will be a desert when he leaves it;—Lady Harriot will be too generous to reproach me with misery;—but will not her tears—her sufferings—tacitly upbraid me!—These reflections determine me for a moment to detain Lord Archer—but the idea of Bloomfield rushes suddenly on my imagination, and instantly obliterates every other impression. Fatal attachment! why is it thus indelibly engraven on my soul? Yet I do not now love him, but I cannot attempt to account for sensations which are inconceivable even to myself; his inconstancy has inspired me with an antipathy even to the idea of love, and after having been already so cruelly deceived, is it wonderful that I cannot listen without horror to professions of tenderness from the lips of another?

Does

Does *self* then predominate! must Lord Archer be suffered to depart! Ah, Lady Harriot, retract your reproachful encomiums! how little were you acquainted with the mind you pronounced “*so nobly impartial*, and so generously disinterested!” How shall I now be sunk in your opinion, and degraded in my own!

A letter from Lord Archer!

*The Letter.*

“ I write not to apologize for my unhappy passion, or a confession which was equally involuntary; but I cannot bid an eternal adieu to this venerable mansion, without a few lines expressive of my affection and gratitude to its amiable inhabitants. Long may my dearest and loveliest friend enjoy the tenderness and protection of her revered parents—and may the person she has honoured with her choice, if it is possible, deserve his happiness! Wherever the mandate of fate impells my steps, my heart shall fondly turn to this sweet scene of past felicity!

“ The idea of having been acknowledged  
“ as a brother, and beloved as a friend by  
“ my Delia, shall diffuse over my mind a  
“ ray of pleasing recollection ; and if at  
“ some future—some very distant period,  
“ he can return, consistently with what he  
“ owes to his peace, she shall once more  
“ behold her *unhappy brother* !”

---

He is gone then, and perhaps I may never see him more ! This most amiable of mankind ! he is indeed beloved as a friend and brother.—Can I then drive him to despair. Jenny, who brought me this letter, met Lord Archer booted in the hall—he appeared in violent agitation when he gave it to her—his emotion excited her curiosity—she saw him ride, or rather fly down the avenue, and was informed by his valet de chambre, that he had orders to follow him immediately to Dublin ; it is evident, that by some unaccountable mistake, he believes I have received Lord Hermont as a lover—and—

My



My father comes along the gallery—  
why do I tremble at his approach?

---

“ Let me not alarm you, Delia,” said my father, observing that I rose in confusion; “ I come to solicit your compassion—not to exact your obedience.”

“ Oh ! Sir ! ”—cried I.

“ Hold ” said he, “ let me not be interrupted. When your grandfather this morning informed me of your capricious and unaccountable rejection of Lord Hermont, I was extremely disappointed and chagrined, and meant to expostulate with you warmly on the subject. The situation in which I found you in the temple; disarmed my resentment for the time—and in Lady Harriot you had the kindest, the most fervent advocate. She was then unconscious that you were the cause of her son’s distress and exile—but the knowledge of this circumstance has produced no alteration in her sentiments—she is still equally partial



“ to your caprice—still generously atten-  
“ tive to your tranquility ; and after I  
“ had with difficulty extorted from her  
“ the subject of her affliction, she warmly  
“ opposed my interference, and seemed  
“ fearful of the exertion of parental in-  
“ fluence. How a conduct so noble may  
“ affect you, I know not. You cannot, I  
“ think, be unworthy and ungrateful, vo-  
“ luntarily to render wretched the person  
“ to whom you owe so many obligations,  
“ you must be both.”

“ If your friends were desirous of sacri-  
“ ficing your peace to an unworthy am-  
“ bition or a sordid avarice ; if they wished  
“ to connect you with age and ugliness,  
“ with personal or with mental deformity,  
“ your resistance to their desires would  
“ not be merely justifiable ; it would be  
“ rational and praise-worthy. But the  
“ person they recommend to your choice,  
“ is no less calculated to satisfy your judg-  
“ ment than to engage your affection ; for  
“ I cannot suppose you so mercenary as to  
“ be influenced by his want of fortune.

“ He

“ He is admired and approved by your  
“ friends; they regret his departure and  
“ wish you to recall him; but their deli-  
“ cacy will not permit them to bias your  
“ inclinations. It is true, you are inde-  
“ pendant of those friends; but if you are  
“ really generous, this consideration will  
“ render you more attentive to their  
“ wishes.”

“ Of myself I say nothing—I have al-  
“ ready waved my right to your obedience,  
“ and will only remind you that your re-  
“ fusing to recall her son will embitter  
“ Lady Harriot’s existence, and of con-  
“ sequence my own. The happiness of  
“ my future life depends on your decision  
“ —a decision on which you cannot hesi-  
“ tate, if your breast retains one spark of  
“ generosity or compassion.—You need not  
“ now answer me,” continued he, observ-  
ing I endeavoured to speak. “ I will leave  
“ you at leisure to form your determina-  
“ tion; but you will indeed most cruelly  
“ disappoint me if it is not conformable to  
“ the wishes of your family.”

Yes—I now see but too plainly that my friends do indeed expect me to marry, as Lady Harriot informed me they did—and that the pleasing schemes I had formed for my future life, were romantic and visionary. The persuasions she addressed to me, when she so forcibly pleaded the suit of Lord Hermont, now strongly recur.—“ If you  
“ should hereafter be powerfully solicited  
“ in favour of a person less worthy and  
“ amiable, will you not with reason regret  
“ your present rejection of Lord Her-  
“ mont?”—But how much stronger is the plea, when urged in favour of Lord Archer?

Oh, my Henrietta! I have no longer an alternative,—decide as I will, it is my fate to be unhappy!—If I send Lord Archer a wanderer from his country—if I disappoint the views of my family—if I wound the heart of my father and my benefactress, shall I not forfeit forever that sweet self esteem, that soothing complacency which results from the consciousness of a noble and disinterested conduct?—I am interrupted



interrupted by Lady Harriot. As she entered, the first bell rung for dinner.

“ I cannot go down, Madam,” said I.

“ No matter, my love, I shall send you something by Jenny.”

“ You need not, Madam,” replied I, “ I have no appetite at present. I have given you too much uneasiness,”—continued I, observing she looked extremely affected, “ but for the future—”

“ Oh my too generous Delia,” cried she, throwing her arms round me and reclining her face on my neck, whilst her tears streamed in my bosom, “ I cannot accept the sacrifice of your happiness !

“ Nor shall you, Madam—we shall all be happy yet.”

She fondly kissed my cheek, and left me abruptly.

After some little struggles between inclination on one side, and duty, friendship, gratitude and compassion on the other—whilst I write those dear and sacred names—a glow of conscious shame suffuses my cheeks, on the reflection that they have been



been combated in my bosom, by so mean a motive as a partial selfishness—but the conflict is over, and my Henrietta shall not blush for the friend of her heart!

When my determination was formed, I became more tranquil.—I once more read Lord Archer's letter—it inspired me with new fortitude.—I took the pen and wrote this answer.

*The Answer.*

“ In what unnecessary distress has your  
 “ precipitation involved you ! Lord Her-  
 “ mont is undoubtedly the person whom  
 “ you suppose to be the object of my  
 “ choice—but had you been more explicit  
 “ this morning, or less abrupt in your de-  
 “ parture from Bloomfield, I might have  
 “ had an opportunity of rectifying your  
 “ error.

“ I acknowledge I have long been par-  
 “ tial to a single state. Surrounded by  
 “ the tenderest parents, the most indul-  
 “ gent friends, I felt not a wish beyond  
 “ my present situation ; but it is not ap-  
 “ proved

“ proved by those, whose judgment ought  
“ to have most weight with me—they wish  
“ me to alter it, and I do no more than  
“ justice to my own feelings and your  
“ merit, when I assure you, that you are  
“ the person on earth to whom I can least  
“ reluctantly make the sacrifice of my li-  
“ berty.

“ Return then, my Lord, every one  
“ earnestly wishes your arrival, but no  
“ one will receive you with more unfeigned  
“ satisfaction than -

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

As my fate was now inevitably determined, I resolved to submit to it with the best grace in my power, and to assume, if possible, the appearance of serenity. I wiped away my tears, and went to the glass, but started on beholding the alteration which a few hours had produced in my aspect. However, as I had not changed my clothes since morning, I rang for Jenny, and took more pains than usual with my dress ;—Indeed I never stood in more need of its assistance.

I had

I had just finished when Lady Harriot returned to me. I saw her countenance animated with pleasure when she looked at me; I dared not speak lest my voice should betray my feelings, but pointed to the table on which the letter lay; she hastily read it.

“Now,” cried she, embracing me in a transport of pleasure, “you are indeed my daughter!—But,” continued she, with an embarrassed air —“before this letter can be sent, my generous Delia must resolve on one thing more—she must give me her sacred promise never to mention to my son her former engagements with Bloomfield.”

“How, Madam,” cried I, whilst a deep blush overspread my face; “can you wish me to impose on your son—to render myself undeserving his tenderness by consenting to deceive him!”

“It merits not the name of deceit,” replied she, “it is an innocent concealment which is necessary to his happiness. If I strove to ensnare you in the vile subterfuges.



“terfuges of fraud or falshood, the re-  
“pugnance you exprefs would be juft and  
“natural. But where is the fyftem of  
“morals fo fevere, as not to allow us to  
“conceal by filence, paff events, the dif-  
“covery of which would only occafion  
“uneafinefs. I know the delicacy of my  
“fon’s affection; if he could conceive the  
“flighteft fufpicion of having a rival in  
“your heart—the idea would drive him  
“to the moft diftant part of the globe.—  
“But if you cannot fubmit to a myftery  
“fo abfolutely effential to his repofe, I  
“will not pain your generous nature, by  
“any farther remonftrances;—and fhall  
“only conjure you not to fend this letter,  
“he has already fuffered but too much—  
“let him not then be tortured with a pro-  
“fpect of felicity which he can never  
“enjoy.”

“I acknowledge,” faid I, “my foul re-  
“volts againft the practice of infincerity  
“—yet this is not my moft material ob-  
“jection—if by any accident Lord Ar-  
“cher fhould hereafter difcover—”

“Of



“ Of such an event,” interrupted she,  
“ there is not the least probability, or  
“ should it even take place at some dis-  
“ tant period, you would find no difficulty  
“ in reconciling him to a conduct, to  
“ which you could have no inducement,  
“ but a delicate attention to his own peace  
“ and serenity. However, ’tis of little  
“ consequence to convince the judgment  
“ without satisfying the heart. I am con-  
“ scious that the pleadings of an advo-  
“ cate so prejudiced and interested as I  
“ confess myself to be, ought to have no  
“ influence—and wish you to submit im-  
“ plicitly to the arbitration of your own  
“ feelings. Whatever may be their de-  
“ cision, so far from endeavouring to re-  
“ peal, I will not even repine at it. Per-  
“ haps the departure of my son, though  
“ we be separated forever—perhaps the  
“ total disappointment of the hopes you  
“ have permitted me to cherish—may not  
“ wound my peace so deeply—not so very  
“ deeply as I imagine—at present I am  
“ most apprehensive lest the enthusiasm of  
“ your

“ your friendship —the heroic elevation  
“ of your sentiments should lead you too  
“ far.”

Were Lady Harriot the most artful and designing, instead of being the most candid and ingenuous of human beings, she could not have addressed me in a style better calculated to ensure my consent to her wishes. Cruel, indeed, and unfeeling must I be, voluntarily to destroy the serenity of a breast so noble, and little would I have merited her too flattering praises, if I felt no generous emulation to deserve them.

Yet I consented not without the greatest reluctance to this first deceit I have ever practised. Lady Harriot took the letter, which she enclosed to Lord Archer, in one of her own.—She left me to enquire for a messenger to send it by.

Aunt Sophy came to me, I had not seen her since morning.

“ My dear child,” cried she, whilst she fondly clasped me to her worthy heart,  
“ why did not you inform us last night of  
“ your partiality for Lord Archer? How  
“ could

“ could you expect that any objections  
“ would arise from us, who are only  
“ anxious for your happiness? — Your  
“ grandmother and I are really angry with  
“ you.”

I instantly perceived they were in the same error they had fallen into, in respect to Wentworth, and was on the point of undeceiving my aunt, until I recollected that it was a delusion which would contribute to their happiness; for the happiness of those dear and respected friends seems to be entirely dependant on that of your Delia.

Lady Harriot soon after returned with my grandmother, who embraced me with the utmost tenderness.

“ I would not have been so long without seeing my Delia,” said she, “ but that I received a hint,” looking at Lady Harriot as she spoke, “ that my company this morning would have been less acceptable than usual.”

“ Your company, Madam, must be always acceptable to me.”

“ Yes,



“ Yes, my love, but there may be some situations. But come,” continued she, observing I looked confused, “ we will drop this subject for the present—you shall walk with us in the garden.”

Indeed I was surprized that she and my aunt had not come to me in the morning, and every instant dreaded seeing them. How kindly considerate was it in Lady Harriot to save me this mortification;—but is she not always, even in the minutest circumstances, attentive to my peace?

The Dean and Wentworth spent the evening with us. To account for my altered looks, I complained, and not without reason, of a violent head-ach. Wentworth, I thought, looked as if he suspected something more; but though we walked together in the evening, he forbore to make enquiries, and was most affectionately solicitous to entertain me.

Lord Hermont, I hear, went off this morning.

I remained with them all the evening. The company must have been disagreeable indeed,



indeed, which I should not have preferred to my own reflections. I was sorry when we separated for the night.

I look back with surprize on the transactions of the past day. Every instant I recollect my situation with new astonishment—a thousand times I ask myself if I have relinquished forever those pleasing schemes with which I have been accustomed to sooth my imagination; if I have really consented to be the wife of Archer—I feel as if in a dream.—Oh that I could awake as if from a distressful vision, and find my mind restored to its lost serenity!

Lord Archer, I expect, will return tomorrow.—I dread his arrival, lest I should not be able to meet him as I ought.—The clock strikes three.—Adieu, my dearest friend.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LET-

## L E T T E R LII.

*Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.*

I SCARCELY knew whether to weep or to rejoice at your letter, but indeed I have wept incessantly since I received it; for is it possible that Henrietta can rejoice whilst her Delia is afflicted? Your determination was such as you could not avoid forming, unless your soul had renounced its predominant passions, its enthusiasm of generosity, and its fervor of affection. Blush for you, my Delia! No, you have ever been the pride of my heart, the dearest blessing of my life! And tenderly as I am attached to a man so worthy my partiality, were it possible that this engagement should interfere with my friendship for you, I should without hesitation relinquish it forever.

I easily foresaw Lord Hermont's fate; nor, amiable as I know him to be, did I  
with

wish it should be otherwise decided. Wentworth, as it was natural, was partial to his friend; but Archer was the person of all others I most wished you to approve. You cannot continue insensible to his merit. Notwithstanding the reluctance so naturally the consequence of a disappointment yet recent in your memory, you will return his affection, and we shall all be happy.

Poor Lady Harriot! what must she have suffered in a suspense so dreadful! how nobly disinterested has her conduct been! she is indeed an admirable woman. Yet is it not astonishing, Delia, that with the acuteness of penetration, she so eminently possesses, she should so unaccountably have overlooked her son's partiality to you, a partiality, which I, though but a very superficial observer, have long suspected, and have often been surprized that it could so long escape your attention. I confess, I wished you to return it, and was determined not to put you on your guard, by remarking it to you. It is true, it was always most visible in your absence. His  
cheek



cheek glowed at the mention of your name, and his countenance was animated with unusual vivacity, whenever you were the subject of conversation. At such intervals, I have seen Lady Harriot dart such piercing glances at him, as fully convinced me she entertained suspicions similar to my own.—But her conduct in respect to Lord Hermont, has undeceived me. If conscious of Lord Archer's passion, so warmly to favour the pretensions, so disinterestedly to press the suit of his rival—she must have been more than woman!

I have received a long letter from Wentworth. He rejoices in the approaching happiness of Lord Archer, though he cannot avoid feeling for the disappointment of his friend.—If I were inclined to cherish the *green-eyed monster*, his passionate admiration of you would supply me with sufficient cause of jealousy. But he never pleases me so much, as when he writes of my Delia—his letters give me the reflection of my own thoughts—and is it not this



similarity of sentiment that has so tenderly united our hearts ?

Adieu, my sweet friend ! If you would make me happy, tell me your amiable mind is restored to its usual serenity.

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.

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### L E T T E R   L I I I .

*Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.*

Thursday night.

**T**HE interview I so greatly dreaded, is over, my dear friend. Archer returned this evening. I was walking with Lady Harriot in the park. We saw him at a distance, but as soon as he discerned us, he leaped from the chaise and flew to us.—He was at my feet in an instant. I stretched out my hands to raise him, but could not speak. Lady Harriot tenderly clasped her arms round us both ;—she kissed us alternately with tears of joy.

“ Do

“ Do I then live,” said she, “ to see  
“ my amiable, my equally beloved chil-  
“ dren thus tenderly united !—Ah, could  
“ my most presumptuous hopes have flat-  
“ tered me with the most distant prospect  
“ of bliss so unexpected—of felicity so  
“ exquisite !”

Lord Archer was silent, but never was silence so expressive.—At the garden gate, we were met by the rest of the family, who were informed of his arrival by the servants that attended him. They all embraced and bad him welcome with the strongest expressions of pleasure. I was much more tranquil and serene than I had hoped I should have been. I must indeed have been insensible, if I had not participated in the joy so strongly pictured in every face around me. And yet, my Henrietta, it is but a sort of artificial satisfaction, and my mind, like an object brightened by reflected light, resumes its gloomy colour the instant the ray that illumined it is withdrawn ; I know I am perverse and ungrate-

ful; I know I ought to be very happy—and I will endeavour to think myself so.

You are surprized I never observed Lord Archer's partiality.—Indeed I now recollect many instances of it, to which I paid little attention at the time they occurred—I remember once being inspired by his jealousy with a vague suspicion—which vanished on reflecting that though love never exists without jealousy, the latter is often found unconnected with the former; it arises from pride, from vanity, from disappointed emulation.—And as neither you, nor any of my other friends appeared to suspect his attachment to me; and that his attentions were only such, as from his politeness and friendship, I might reasonably expect—It was no wonder I did not perceive it, especially as he sedulously endeavoured to elude suspicion; though it is extremely probable I should have been more penetrating, if it had been an event of which the discovery would have given me pleasure.

Friday

Friday morn.

This morning we have had a long conversation. With what an amiable ingenuousness has he acquainted me with every circumstance of his life. He too, has been disappointed in a first affection. He had been engaged to a young lady of beauty and accomplishments, but no fortune—she refused to consent to a private union—and Lady Harriot's influence obliged him to renounce a resolution he had formed of waiting some favourable revolution in his affairs, and induced him to break off his engagements entirely. The lady is since advantageously married. How ardently did I wish to be equally candid. But though I had not been bound to secrecy by my promise to Lady Harriot, I am convinced I should have found it impossible to speak on a subject, which even to recollect, agitates me but too violently. His little narrative recalled it so forcibly to my memory, that I could not restrain my tears. He saw my emotion with transport, for he imputed it to a motive very different from the true



one,—a motive, which, if I loved him, would be very natural.

I am interrupted by a visit from Lady Mordaunt. I must go and receive her, as my aunt and grandmother are out airing. I suppose she has heard some reports, and is come to make observations.

She flew to embrace me the instant she saw me.

“ My dear girl,” cried she, “ I am  
“ quite rejoiced to find you alone. You  
“ cannot conceive how I have been de-  
“ lighted with the news!—But I am sur-  
“ prized you did not make me your con-  
“ fidante—you know I’d be the properest  
“ person in the world—and then, I’m the  
“ most delicate creature in affairs of this  
“ nature.—I should have managed the mat-  
“ ter infinitely better, and saved you a  
“ world of trouble. To be sure, you have  
“ been barbarously treated, and I highly  
“ commend your spirit. I never heard  
“ any thing so abominable, as it was of  
“ that mercenary old hunk, your grand-  
“ father, to drive the young man out of  
“ the

“ the house in the manner he did ! But  
“ I’m told, it was all the fine contrivance  
“ of that avaricious old devil, the Dean,  
“ because he wanted to get you for his  
“ own scare-crow of a nephew.—Who’d  
“ have suspected he was such a vile wretch !  
“ Though to say the truth, I believe those  
“ people that make such a route about  
“ wisdom and virtue and piety, *and all that*  
“ *sort of thing*, are always hypocritical  
“ wretches, like the Dean. A pretty  
“ match you’d have made of it. Lord  
“ knows, you’ll have a blessed escape, for  
“ such a set of Goths and Vandals, I be-  
“ lieve no poor girl—”

“ Your ladyship speaks in riddles,” interrupted I, when I could recover from my astonishment, “ what young man did  
“ my grandfather drive out of the house ?  
“ You must have been strangely misin-  
“ formed.”

“ O, you are very reserved !—but all  
“ the country knows, that the instant Sir  
“ Richard intercepted the letter, which  
“ declared Lord Archer’s passion for you,

“ he went directly to consult his oracle,  
“ old Mundungus, who preached him up  
“ into such a fury, that he drove away to  
“ the temple in the park, where he knew  
“ by the letter, you had made an assigna-  
“ tion with Lord Archer.”

“ I make an assignation with Lord  
“ Archer !”

“ And why not, if you chose it ?—I  
“ think you were quite in the right, and I  
“ see no good in your being independent  
“ of your family, if you mayn’t please  
“ yourself. At all events, I am sure I  
“ would not be hector’d in that manner.  
“ To think of his abusing his Lordship in  
“ the manner he did (I wonder where he  
“ got such scurrilous and opprobrious lan-  
“ guage) and turning him out of doors,  
“ without letting him stay for his boots or  
“ attendants. (Sure, I met him myself fly-  
“ ing like the wind.) To be sure, he might  
“ have saluted me as he pass’d. I declare,  
“ I thought he’d have overturned the car-  
“ riage in the ditch. He looked as if just  
“ broke loose from Bedlam—no wonder,  
“ such



“such treatment was enough to set any  
“one distracted. I think he did the old  
“russian great honor—and it is not every  
“man of quality that would condescend  
“to inhabit his old worm-eaten cathedral.  
“His mother is the only rational being in  
“the family, except yourself—she’s a wo-  
“man of fashion, and you’d have been  
“the greatest fool in nature, if you had  
“not acted as you did!”

“And pray how did I act?”

“How did you act! why just as you  
“ought to have done. When you re-  
“covered from the violent hysteric fit,  
“which your grandfather’s vile behaviour  
“threw you into; you said you were  
“your own mistress, and would have Lord  
“Archer in spite of them. You went up  
“into your own apartment, and took your  
“oath upon the Prayer-book, that you  
“would never see one of the tyrannical  
“old brutes, unless they consented to send  
“for your lover and marry you to him  
“directly.”

D 5

“A very

“ A very pious resolution indeed,”  
said I.

“ It was at least a very proper one. Was  
“ it not evening before the obstinate  
“ wretches could be brought to hear rea-  
“ son! and were they not so incensed at  
“ your resistance, that they would not let  
“ you have a morsel of dinner. I never  
“ heard such shocking barbarity! what  
“ would they have! Do they want more  
“ money to chink in their bags, the cove-  
“ tous old harpies! Is not he a man of  
“ quality—a peer of the realm? Such a  
“ pretty fellow too.—I can tell you, I know  
“ a lady that would gladly be your rival—  
“ an earl’s daughter too, but no matter.—  
“ Indeed, if you wanted to marry a poor  
“ sneaking pitiful wretch, without a title,  
“ like Wentworth, the Dean’s hopeful  
“ nephew—some people say, he is nearer  
“ allied—but however that may be, I am  
“ rejoiced to think you’ll get out of their  
“ clutches.—I always had a particular  
“ friendship for you, and it often pro-  
“ voked me to see you kept in leading-  
“ strings,

“ strings, by that solemn pufs, your grand-  
“ mother, and that ridiculous grimalkin,  
“ your aunt.”

“ If your ladyship,” replied I, “ can  
“ find no more obliging method of as-  
“ furing me of your friendship, than that  
“ of loading with aspersions the persons I  
“ most revere and love, I must entreat you  
“ will not honour me with any testimonies  
“ of it for the future. That every article  
“ of the intelligence you just now repeated  
“ to me, is either utterly false, or totally  
“ misrepresented, I cannot be surprized,  
“ when I consider the source it proceeds  
“ from ; and am only astonished that any  
“ person can be found so weak as to be in-  
“ fluenced in opinion by, or so mean as to  
“ lend attention to, the impertinent and  
“ contemptible tattle of servants.”

“ Heaven defend us, what a lecture ! I  
“ vow you are copying old Mundungus ;  
“ but consider, child, preaching is his trade.  
“ How I enjoy his disappointment, and  
“ long to triumph over him : I declare, I’ll  
“ go to him this instant. I’ll congratu-



“ late him on his having such a fine young  
“ man as Wentworth, for a son—then I’ll  
“ begin to worry him with condolences,  
“ and exclaim at your obstinacy and want  
“ of taste, in preferring Lord Archer to  
“ his sweet sprig of divinity. I wish to  
“ heaven I could provoke him to go hang  
“ himself! I mortally hate him.”

Impatient to put her scheme in execution, she left me abruptly. As she is one of those persons, whom it is impossible to convince of an error, I offered not to detain her. Indeed the absurdity of the story, which I know she will be at the pains—or rather the pleasure, to propagate, will prevent its being credited, at least in its extent; though even impartial hearers will probably conclude, that Lord Archer and I entertained a mutual tenderness, which at first excited the displeasure of my family. Such an opinion is by no means disagreeable to me. I should be sorry the reality of my affection for him, was doubted—and doubly-distressed, that my acceptance of  
him

him should be attributed to its true motives.

However, as our parties in the neighbourhood will be extremely displeasing now, that Lord Archer and I are become the objects of particular attention, I believe I shall go to town next week with Lady Harriot. Besides, I can no longer repress my impatience to see and converse with my dearest friend. I am wearied with perpetual restraint, and—interrupted again—and by Lady Mordaunt.

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“ My dear creature, forgive this intrusion ! I could not pass by without calling to tell you—old Mundungus and I have had a pitched battle. I left him stamping and foaming like a madman—you’d have died with laughing—he swears he’ll institute a suit against me in the Bishop’s court for *scandal magnatum*, and have me presented as a nuisance, and banished the neighbourhood. I wish with all my heart he would, for I am  
“ heartily

“ heartily sick of it ! But I’ll be revenged  
“ of the old monster, for I’ll never enter  
“ a church door as long as I live—and  
“ what’s more, he shan’t be invited to my  
“ fete champetre.—I did not intend speak-  
“ ing of it so soon, as I have not sent out  
“ my tickets yet—so don’t mention it.—  
“ You must all come in fancy dresses—I  
“ wish to heaven you could prevail on your  
“ antediluvians to assume some grotesque  
“ characters—It would be so laughable !  
“ But adieu—I vow its four o’clock—we  
“ expect a deal of company at dinner—  
“ people of the first rank—and I shan’t  
“ have an hour to dress !”

She flew down stairs without giving me leave to utter a sentence, and as I am not in a mood to be amused by her folly, I rejoiced to be relieved from her impertinence.      Adieu.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LET-



## L E T T E R   L I V .

*Delia Bloomfield to Mrs. Bloomfield.*

Merrion-square.

**I** ENCLOSE, my dear Madam, an apology to Lady Mordaunt, which I beg you will immediately send her.—Indeed, in the precarious situation Lady Willmore's life is at present, I cannot consent to leave Henrietta, even for a single day.

—I should wish, however, if it is not disagreeable, that you and my grandfather and grandmother, would accept Lady Mordaunt's invitation. I should think it might amuse you to go as spectators—you will meet several of your friends there, and you may return as early as you please.

I am distressed at being so long detained in Dublin, as I fear you are lonesome in my absence. If Lady Willmore grows better, Lord Archer and I will return next week—nor is it necessary to assure you that  
my

my thoughts and wishes are incessantly with you.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

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L E T T E R   L V.

*Mrs. Bloomfield to Delia Bloomfield.*

Bloomfield.

I AM sure, my dear, you were very much in the right not to hurry yourself home on account of Lady Mordaunt's rare show! —I wish with all my heart the Dean would present her as a nuisance, and get her banished the neighbourhood, as he threatened to do, for I protest, there is no such thing as having peace and quietness with her and her mad freaks. If we have not suffered pretty well, it is no matter! —But I'll tell you all about it.

You must know then, after she had harassed us with visits and messages, night and

and day, until she made us promise to go, though it was much against the grain, she wanted to dress us up in some strange heathenish figures—but this we positively refused, and consented only to go as lookers on.—Well—yesterday morning I got this note from her. I inclose it to you, for I believe such stuff was never strung together, by young or old.

*The Note.*

“ DEAR BLOOMFIELD.

“ I am in the highest spirits in nature !  
 “ —The Marquis of F—, Lord Charles  
 “ F—, and Lady Betty P—, are this instant  
 “ arrived. Then, I am sure of twenty or  
 “ thirty more—people of the first *ton*—  
 “ and all the gentry within twenty miles  
 “ of me.

“ I have with great difficulty prevailed  
 “ on Sir Humphry, to personate Neptune  
 “ —so you know he’ll have nothing to do  
 “ but to sit on his throne—the most elegant  
 “ thing in the world, all hung round with

“ sea-



“ sea-weed, and surrounded by pasteboard  
“ alligators, beautifully painted — quite  
“ characteristic—all my own invention,  
“ and entirely *nouvel*. I have placed it on  
“ the little island in the lake. I got him to  
“ sit on it last night, with his head crowned  
“ with ooze, and a trident in his hand.  
“ You can’t conceive what a prodigious  
“ effect he produced—you’d have been  
“ quite in love with him. I intend to ap-  
“ pear in the character of Amphitrite, and  
“ when you see my *conque*—but I won’t  
“ anticipate.

“ I have transformed all my herds and  
“ dairy maids into shepherds and sheper-  
“ desses. But as I have no sheep of my  
“ own, I must entreat Sir Richard will  
“ send me a hundred or fourscore by the  
“ bearer, and I will return them to-mor-  
“ row morn. They have such a picturesque  
“ appearance, there is positively no doing  
“ without them.

“ As I mean that my demesne should re-  
“ present a kind of Fairy land, or Maho-  
“ metan

“ metan Paradise, I am in vast distress for  
“ a few hourii.—I wish I could prevail on  
“ you to alter your resolution—the habit  
“ might be made in an hour—a loose robe  
“ of muslin with a blue scarf—and I can  
“ lend you a beautiful *chevelure*—the com-  
“ pletest thing—I got it from Paris—with  
“ long flowing curls—you would find it a  
“ thousand times more snug and comfor-  
“ able than your black bonnet, and you  
“ might wear it over cap and all.

“ I wish Sir Richard would take some  
“ character—sure it would cost him no  
“ great exertion to represent an Egyptian  
“ Mummy—or something in that way—and  
“ for her Ladyship, I have the most ele-  
“ gant habit of a Mother Shipton.—I had  
“ it made last winter for Sir Humphry—  
“ I am convinced it would suit her ex-  
“ tremely—and if you think the dress  
“ of a houri too troublesome, you may  
“ come as an attendant witch, and then  
“ you’ll have little or no alteration to  
“ make in your appearance, besides the  
“ addition

“ addition of a high crowned hat and a  
“ broomstick.”

“ Your’s, dear creature,

“ F. MORDAUNT.”

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Now I ask you, Delia, did you ever read such a letter in your days?—If your grandfather had been ruled by me, he would not have sent her one of the sheep. But he would not take my advice, and so sign by it—but you shall hear.—However, I persuaded him to send but forty, and I took care they should be the worst we had in the world.

Well, at seven in the evening, away we went, and when we got to Wood-Park, every thing was turned so topsy turvy, that I protest I could hardly believe my own eyes—but not a creature did we see, except a few cow boys and milk maids, drest up with long crooks in their hands, and garlands on their heads, and some of our poor sheep here and there, limping  
about

about—for they had so tethered and manacled the poor creatures, to keep them from running away (it being a strange place), that you would have been provoked to see them.

When we got to the house, not a being was there to receive us, or a place to shew us into, but the housekeeper's parlour, who told us the rooms would not be opened for an hour and an half, and said her Ladyship had no notion of "any one's coming" at such an hour."—I wanted my brother and sister to come home again—but they would not;—and there we sat until it grew almost dark. Crowds of carriages began to come, and at last we were shewn into the gardens, which were all illuminated and adorned with pyramids and arches, and vagaries of different shapes—and stuck over with coloured lights, and paintings with candles behind them, like Cupid's Paradise, in the puppet-show—and what not! There we met the Myrvens and Franklins, all in fancy dresses, and very pretty they looked, upon my word—they enquired



enquired very kindly for you, I assure you. —We all went together to the lake, and there on the little island was poor Sir Humphry stuck up in a kind of elbow-chair, with long strings of sea-weed dangling about his beard, and something like a three pronged flesh fork in his hand. Lord knows, for any thing he had to do, he might have been made of pasteboard as well as the alligators; he looked so woe-begone and ghastly, I protest he'd have made your heart ach—but his lady was the best of all! —There she sat in the middle of the water, in a thing directly the shape of an open cockle, with the uppermost shell turned back, and all set with coloured lamps; what supported it, I am sure I know not, but she was the very picture of a witch in an egg-shell. She had a sort of gown that glittered all over like the scales of a salmon. I suppose she was by way of a mermaid—but then, she should have had a comb in her hand.

I protest, I thought no other end would have come to the girls that were with me,  
but

but that they would have split their sides with laughing!

By this time it began to grow very cold and darkish—and to blow very hard—so a parcel of us got together in a little summer house, and the rest crowded under a sort of canopy that was stretched over a part of the bowling-green. Here we were a little more comfortable, and got tea and coffee, which we greatly wanted, not having broken our fast since dinner time.

I looked out of the window and there I saw the servants towing Lady Mordaunt to land in her cockle-shell—but not a creature would stir a step to poor Sir Humphry's assistance, though he kept roaring and stamping and shaking his flesh-fork at them like a Bedlamite—for by this time it began to pour as if heaven and earth were coming together; and if it had not been for your grandfather that went out in the rain and made them put a broad plank over the water, I believe in my conscience, they'd have left him there till now.

There

There was such hurry-skurry and confusion, nothing could be like it. The company under the canopy, which began to let in the rain, were wet to the skin almost, and such a deal of them flocked into the summer house, that it was like nothing but the black-hole of Calcutta, as your grandfather said, and we were obliged to open the windows for fear of being suffocated.

Well, in about an hour's time, it cleared up, and they began to play off the fireworks—There were all the ladies draggling through the wet grass, and if they don't get fevers, I wonder at it. But what was worse than all the rest, the paste-board alligators that were stuffed with gunpowder, blew up before their time with a terrible explosion, and some of the company were severely burned, and the rest terrified out of their wits—there was such squeaking and squalling, nothing could be like it, and Lady Mordaunt's favourite lap-dog was hoisted up into the air, and has never been heard of since. I thought I never  
should



should get home alive. It began to rain as hard as ever, and though your grandmother and I had *paraplús* and boxes—we were well ducked before we got to the carriage. It was twelve o'clock before we got home; but if ever she catches me at another of her *shampeters*, I wonder at it. The rest of the company staid and had a ball, and after that a breakfast.

But this was not the worst of it! As soon as I got up this morning, I sent to enquire for the sheep, for I guessed we should have a Flemish account of them; and as I was walking in the lawn, behold you! what should I see but a cart-load of them coming along as dead as herrings, and five or six more hopping after on three legs. The poor animals were so tied and hampered, that many of them fell into ditches, and were smothered in the mire, and others had their legs broke. To be sure, I never was in such a rage! I could have cried with vexation to see such havock and destruction; and when I enquired for the rest of them, they told me they supposed they



were come home of their own accord; for that they had made their escape under favour of the night, and no one knew what was become of them. A fine story truly!—if your grandfather does not make her pay for every one of them at the market-price, he is the greatest fool that ever wore a head. I have no notion of being bamboozled at that rate.

We have all got shocking colds, and we hear, poor Sir Humphry is confined to his bed, and that her ladyship has entirely lost her voice; I wish, for my part, she may never recover it; she is absolutely the pest of the neighbourhood. Only to think of her wanting to make a houri of me at my time of life—and then her impudence, to tell me I wanted nothing but a high crowned hat and a broomstick, to make a witch of me!—I hope there is some difference between us.—Lord forbid I was such a painted harridan—such a whited sepulchre, as the Dean says.

I wish it was over, one way or other, with Lady Willmore.—Poor Henrietta will be quite

quite hagged out with her.—Farewel, my dear—it is twelve o'clock, and I have given no orders about dinner. My love to Lord Archer, and believe me, my dear child,

Your affectionate aunt and true friend,

SOPHIA BLOOMFIELD.

## L E T T E R LVI.

*Delia Bloomfield to Mrs. Bloomfield.*

FROM your description of Lady Mor-daunt's fete champetre, my dear aunt, we have no great reason to regret our detention in Dublin, on that account. Indeed, well as I am acquainted with her absurdities, I scarcely expected it would have been so superlatively ridiculous.

We have resolved on a plan, which gives me infinite satisfaction. Henrietta and Wentworth are to be privately married. Lady Willmore, who now wishes her child

happy, rather than great, was the person who first proposed it. Fully sensible of her approaching dissolution, she expressed the most ardent desire to be witness to an union, which will dissipate her anxious solicitude on her beloved daughter's account, by securing her an asylum, to which she may fly with propriety, when the inevitable stroke of death separates them for ever.—Poor Henrietta consented with excessive reluctance.

“ Must our union,—” said she, when Wentworth ardently pressed her compliance, with the wishes of her mother; “ must  
“ our union be celebrated beneath such  
“ melancholy auspices ! Must the hour,  
“ that gives me to my Wentworth, be  
“ clouded with sorrow—shall our nuptial  
“ torch be extinguished in tears.”

Wentworth has written on this subject to the Dean, who, in his answer, not only testifies his warmest approbation of this measure, but has promised to come to Dublin, to perform the ceremony. Wentworth is preparing the writings, which are  
to



to be in readiness against the Dean's arrival. Every thing is to be conducted with strict secrecy. The Dean is expected on Wednesday, and on Thursday morning they are to be married in Lady Willmore's apartment, without any witnesses but Lady Harriot and me—and the instant the ceremony is finished, we are all to set out for Bloomfield, if Lady Willmore grows no worse than at present we have reason to expect. To avoid suspicion, Wentworth will accompany us.

Heaven grant no disagreeable event may intervene to detain us longer in Dublin. After so long a separation, I am impatient to return to my beloved friends. Lord Archer is well, and sends his respects, &c. It is superfluous to say, he is to accompany us on Thursday. You know he is at present one of my appendages, and must consequently attend my movements.

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.



## L E T T E R LVII.

*Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.*

Bloomfield.

**L**ET my Henrietta return me the congratulations I bestowed on her. In her union with Wentworth, the warmest wish of my heart is accomplished, and if that heart, rebellious and perverse, should ever be tempted to repine at its own destiny, in the contemplation of her happiness, it shall lose every recollection of its own distresses.

Wentworth, I suppose, informed you, that Lady Harriot returned with him to Dublin, on Monday. The three days he staid here, hung heavily on his hands, and nothing but the Dean's being unable to perform the duties of Sunday, could have detained him longer than Saturday.

I received a letter this morning from my father, which gives me some uneasiness. He informs me, he is obliged to go to  
London,

London, on business of consequence, that his journey cannot possibly be deferred longer than three weeks—and expresses the most ardent desire to see me united to Lord Archer, previous to his departure; as the time of his return will be very uncertain.

I know not what to determine.—Two months have scarcely elapsed since I beheld Lord Archer, otherwise than as a friend—he is himself far from appearing anxious to conclude affairs abruptly.—I think I am reconciled to my fate—and yet as its crisis approaches, I feel strange agitations!

I approve and esteem—nay, I affectionately love him,—my vanity is gratified by the homage it receives from a man so universally admired—but my heart is still refractory—it refuses the blessings which solicit its acceptance, and reverts with a gloomy satisfaction to those which are lost to it for ever!

Lady Harriot has written to Lord Archer on the same subject. When he read me her letter, far from becoming presumptuous on its contents, he entreated me with

the most respectful gentleness, to be influenced entirely by my own feelings—assuring me at the same time, that no delay which was necessary to my tranquility, would appear tedious to him.—Indeed, I cannot avoid perceiving that he is but half contented with me — his tenderness undoubtedly merits a warmer return—but our feelings are involuntary, and it is in vain we contend with them.

What then shall I gain by delaying an event which must inevitably take place. Such a protraction may displease my father, and disappoint Lady Harriot, without producing any alteration in my sentiments to enable me to consent with less reluctance to their wishes.

I will not lessen the value of the material concessions I have made to them by a contention about trifles.—I have already submitted my fate to their arbitration,—let them then dispose of it as they please !

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LET.



## L E T T E R    L V I I I .

*Lady Harriot Bloomfield to her Sister.*

Merrion-square.

O H, my sister, is this agitated bosom never more to know repose ! Bloomfield's regiment is returning from America. — From the letters he wrote from thence, may I not fear he still retains his passion for Delia. — Already, perhaps, he is arrived in England — or even in Ireland. Gracious heaven, what may now be the result of all my artifices !

But one step remains — I must precipitate this marriage, and have already induced Mr. Bloomfield to write to Delia on the subject. — He is to go to England in three weeks — if she consents to become my daughter before his departure, I have promised to accompany him. Hereafter I can devise some pretence for breaking my engagement.

Never till now was I truly miserable!—  
 If Bloomfield should return to Ireland—if  
 he should form a resolution of going to  
 Bloomfield—all would be irretrievably  
 lost!—his temper was impetuous—his af-  
 fection was violent.—I shudder to think  
 what it now may dictate.—Every loud rap  
 at the door—every stranger that enquires  
 for me—throws me into frightful agita-  
 tions. Fiends and furies would be less hor-  
 rid to my view! Adieu, Maria; never may  
 you feel the pangs which torture your  
 unhappy Sister,

HARRIOT BLOOMFIELD.

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## LETTER LIX.

*Colonel Bloomfield to Miss Julia Bloomfield.*

London.

**Y**OUR brother is returned, my Julia,  
 crowned with such tarnished laurels,  
 as were to be obtained in a campaign so in-  
 glorious! Ah! my sister, the country I so  
 long

long and so earnestly wished to revisit is become a desert ! How peculiarly unfortunate is your absence at this period.

The wounded mind flies eagerly to every expedient that promises relief. I hoped to find in America, that tranquility which my native country no longer afforded me—deceitful idea ! The same cares—the same sorrows and solitudes which drove me from England, pursued me through the clime to which I vainly flew for refuge, and the scenes of bloodshed and horror, of dismay and desolation—in which I have been not only a spectator, but an actor, have impressed them indelibly on my soul ; and stained the colour of my thoughts with a tincture of melancholy, beyond the power of fortune to obliterate.

Surrounded by the terrors and devastations of war, whilst my heart shuddered at the dreadful calamities in which the innocent were equally involved with the guilty, it forgot not its own distresses. I saw thousands, who wished to preserve their existence, fall on every side of me ;—whilst I,



to whom it had long been an oppressive weight, escaped unhurt amidst the carnage. I beheld with envy the breathless corse of each bleeding warrior, who gloriously expired in the defence of his country. Fearless of death, I rushed amidst the thickest of the enemy—the fate I courted, fled before my victorious arms, and my rashness, misconstrued valour, has covered me with military glory.

Oh Julia, if I could forget the fate of Beaufort ! If I could drown in eternal oblivion the transactions of that fatal night ! Merciful God ! After a separation so tedious—so tenderly lamented, and so anxiously regretted—to find him thus restored to me—the victim of my undistinguishing fury—murdered by this accursed hand !—Amiable—unhappy youth ! why didst thou not execrate thy murderer with thy dying breath.—His prayers—his tears—his generous efforts to reconcile me to the fate of war—his effusions of tenderness and expiring embraces ! Oh Julia, why is a bosom  
unpol-

unpolluted by guilt, doomed for ever to experience the horrors of remorse !

After an event so eternally destructive of my peace, was it wonderful if I detested a profession the source of such dreadful calamities—if in every apparent enemy I feared to pierce the heart of a brother or a friend;—so great indeed were the disgust and horror I had from that hour conceived of it, that no ties less powerful than those of honour could have with-held me from immediately relinquishing it.

When the dead stillness of the night suspended the rage of hostile armies, how often would I leave the camp and climb the craggy cliffs which overhang the ocean. My eyes were continually turned towards the East, as if in search of the beloved country I had abandoned—but nothing but the vast Atlantic met my view. Sometimes I beheld it agitated by frightful tempests, and the rocks I leaned against were dashed by its proud billows.

The thunders, reverberated from the mountains, rolled with tremendous majesty  
around

around me, and the quick succeeding lightnings illumined the gloomy atmosphere with a horrid splendor. The perturbed elements seemed to sympathize with the conflicts of my bosom;—like Zanga, I gazed around with a dreadful satisfaction, and hailed the congenial horrors.

Often at such intervals of despair would I fly to the spot where I had deposited the remains of my murdered friend. It was in the midst of a dark forest, a deep and dreary cavern was his sepulchre. There I passed the melancholy hours of darkness. I flung myself on the earth, and addressed his sleeping ashes—I deprecated his wrath, and implored his compassion; as if the complainings of misery could pierce the ear of death.

I flew with transport to every ship that arrived from England. I envied the meanest sailor on board each vessel that sailed for my native island—now doubly endeared by my tedious exile. And yet, when the hour of my embarkation, so ardently wished for, arrived, it was with difficulty I could determine



termine to tear myself from the grave of my Beaufort—to abandon his dear remains for ever!

Our voyage was prosperous. We reached England in less than seven weeks after we left America. I promised myself at least, one faithful friend to receive and bid me welcome to my native shore; but I cannot express my disappointment, when on my arrival at Pall Mall, I found you were still in France. The servants gathered round me and testified their joy at my return in the most affectionate terms; I had scarcely power to thank them for their fidelity.—I rushed through the apartments as if in search of those amiable inhabitants which once rendered this house the abode of domestic felicity;—but all was disconsolate and gloomy.—Methought your picture, my Julia, which hangs in my dressing-room, viewed me with smiles of tenderness and complacency;—but the other portrait with which in happier days I was permitted to adorn it—forgive the unmanly weakness of  
of

of your brother—a flood of tears relieved the oppression of my heart.

“ Was that countenance,” I cried, whilst I gazed on the too lovely representative of the faithless Delia, “ that countenance “ which so strongly attested the innocence “ and the sincerity of her heart !—was it “ formed by heaven for the purposes of “ deceit and cruelty !—It is impossible !— “ Delia was weak, but she could not have “ been perfidious !”

Why will this flattering idea still obtrude itself on my thoughts ?—Ought I not rather, by a continual remembrance of her falsehood, to endeavour to banish from my heart her fatal image ?—Yet was not my flight to America too precipitate ?—Should I not have waited to hear my sentence pronounced by her own lips ?—Those lips which have so often avowed a reciprocal tenderness !

I date the commencement of my ruin from Mr. Bloomfield's second marriage. Lady Harriot never approved my attachment to Delia.—The warmth of friendship

ship she professed for me, was pretended—the excessive attention with which she treated me was fictitious.—Her whole conduct was artificial—this is a point on which I could never persuade you to agree with me.—Unconscious of deceit yourself, you know not how to suspect it in others—you saw Lady Harriot but little, and were deceived by her specious appearance. You ask me on what I ground my suspicions—and laugh when I speak of a secret perception—an instinctive impression—independent of the understanding, but in this respect its superior. This talent which is generally characterised by a dexterity in discovering characters, is entirely natural. We receive a sudden conviction—an intuitive knowledge—which often impels us to judge contrary to appearances—and though the opinion we form on the credit of this internal evidence, may appear less fair and candid than the conclusions we deduce from the force of reason—hitherto, I confess, I have found them unerring: or, if ever they have led me to censure rashly, I may at least



least plead in my defence that the crime is involuntary :—for it is no more in my power to conquer this natural impulse, than it is to avoid feeling disgust at the view of a disagreeable object—or pleasure at that of an amiable one.

“ But allowing her interested and artful,” you will say, “ from an opposition to your union with her daughter-in-law, what advantages could she hope to derive to herself ? ”

Julia, she has a son !—Perhaps—but I rave ! I know these suggestions will appear romantic in your eyes.—Is it that I would justify my weakness—would whisper false peace to my soul—and still deceive myself with the flattering idea that Delia, young and credulous—volatile and inexperienced, suffered her affections to be estranged by artifice, and was perhaps imposed on by a tale of imagined falsehood—If I had been supplanted by a rival, would she still have continued single.—Would she still have remained at Bloomfield, as I am informed from unquestionable authority she does, and live

live a life of privacy and retirement.—It is true, to the two letters I wrote her from America, I received no answers—Julia, I cannot suffer this suspense! Whatever it may cost me, I am determined on an eclairsissement.—I have been but one day in London and have kept my return a secret.—To-morrow I set out on an expedition, of which my next letter will inform you of the nature and consequences. Adieu.

HORATIO BLOOMFIELD.

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## LETTER LX.

*Julia to her Brother.*

Paris.

**B**LEST be the auspicious hour that restored my Horatio to his native country—to his Julia! Why can I not fly to you on the wings of friendship? How unfortunately every event conspires to detain me

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me in a place, which my impatience to embrace you renders hateful. Mr. Stanmore is gone to the Hague, on business of importance, and his lady is confined to her chamber by a nervous fever. To abandon a person, to whom from my infancy I have been so deeply indebted, and so strongly attached at a period like this, would be impossible. The instant, however, Mr. Stanmore returns, or that I perceive an alteration for the better in my friend, I shall depart.—I have been just now scolding her *Medecin* for not curing her. An English physician would have shaken his great wig and looked solemn—but Monsieur le Docteur only smiled, and told me with an air of gallantry, that I ought to throw the blame entirely on my own *beaux yeux*, which dissipated his ideas by their brilliancy—and prevented him from attending to the symptoms of his patient.

Still in the pensive strain, my brother!  
—Still melancholy and complaining!—  
Have not four long years of absence been  
sufficient to erase from your breast the  
image

image of a faithless fair one?—In the annals of romance, indeed, we read of constant knights, who to blot from their remembrance the idea of some fatal beauty, rush, like my Horace, amidst the thickest of the enemy, and bare their bosoms to the murderous weapon. Surely, if souls transmigrate, that of the enamoured knight who (as Don Quixote of illustrious memory informs us) remained alone nine years or nine months (which, he is not positive) in a dreary desert to deplore the falshood of his haughty princess, animates the bosom of my brother! But in this more enlightened age, these antique ideas of constancy are exploded. Modern love is a plant of such a delicate and sensitive nature, that the least blight of disdain destroys it, and, like some curious exotics, to preserve its existence, a perpetual warmth is absolutely essential. Is it, my brother, that like the good seed in the parable, it falls on “stony places?”—and that the flinty hearts of our beaux and petit maitres supply a soil unpropitious to the kind affections.

How



How weak, my dear Horace, are your regrets—how unavailing your affliction for the catastrophe of your friend!—It was one of those fortuitous events, against which no prescience can guard us—no wisdom can defend.

If your arm, nobly raised in the defence of your country—pierced with erring stroke the bosom of the friend most dear—was not his, armed in a different cause, equally uplifted against your own?—It is the intention that stamps the action—and your blameless soul, though it may feel the pangs of anguish, can never experience the stings of remorse.

Nothing but the pleasure I propose to myself in your society, could reconcile me to the idea of leaving France. I have gotten such a corps of lovers, that I must contrive to decamp privately; for were they to receive the least intimation of my design, though they are all at variance, they would undoubtedly unite their forces to detain the object of their common wishes. A French Marquis, who talks nonsense incessantly,

incessantly, like a delightful creature as he is! An Italian nobleman, who sighs and languishes at my feet—A German Count, who drinks oblivion to his unrequited passion in Lethean draughts—and a Dutch Mynheer, who prefers your Julia to every thing but his sealed money bags. But my reigning favorite is Hezekiah, a charming young Jew, who comes to transact business with Sir Edward. How should you like a brother-in-law of that sect, Horace?—If I could convert him, would it not be a meritorious action? “From lips like mine, what precepts fail to move!” but if in the course of our religious controversies, I should myself get entangled—if he should lead your apostate sister in triumph to his synagogue—No, no—I feel no great partiality to Judaism—So “*most sweet Jew—most beautiful infidel—farewell!*”

Shall we not retire to Clangwinna, this summer? You have a passion for improvements, and so have I. We will make canals—plant shrubberies—cut vistas through our shady groves and build obelisks to terminate

minate them. The stables shall be demolished, because they intercept a beautiful prospect—the pigeon-house in the wilderness shall be converted into an hermit's cell. Every object shall be taught to assume a new aspect, and we will be the authors of the transformation. In the course of my travels, I have collected a great quantity of French and Italian books, which will be a valuable addition to our library, and in Italy I purchased some enchanting musical instruments. When you are inclined to be pensive, my Horatio, I will sooth your soul with “ strains that  
“ listening angels might approve !”—For, as I have applied myself closely to music, with the assistance of the best masters, I have made a wonderful proficiency in that celestial science !

Ours, my friend, will be the union of the soul uncontrouled by any ties, but the filken ones of tenderness and affection ! Shall we not enjoy the pleasures of the marriage state abstracted from its sorrows and solitudes ?—No domestic broils to embitter



embitter our repose, no children to fill our bosoms with anxiety! How happily—how serenely shall our hours glide on—like the first pair in Paradise—for in their state of bliss they had no petulant little elves to torment them with their froward humours. Friendship, that enlivening guest, shall animate our society—but love shall be banished from it for ever. On the little mount that rears its verdant head above the laurel grove, we will build a temple and consecrate it to Diana—and a victim Cupid, despoiled of his peace, destroying his weapons, shall lie bound on the altar of the chaste divinity.

I cannot conceive on what design you have left London—you do not surely mean—but no—I will not suppose you so infatuated!—

In a month at farthest I shall be with you—how tedious will that interval appear. Methinks I could form a request similar to that of the lover who prayed the Gods to annihilate time and space.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD.

## L E T T E R   L X I.

*Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.*

**W**ELL, my dear, my fate is decided —I have received my sentence from my father's hand, and on Thursday the 15th the sacrifice is to be completed. They want me to go to Dublin to make preparations, but as I am determined that every thing shall be conducted with all possible secrecy—I will make none. I shall have time enough hereafter—and it may perhaps be an amusement—at present it would be greatly the reverse.

My good friends are by no means satisfied with the privacy I insist on. They want me to invite the Myrvens and Franklins—"It will look so unnatural," says Aunt Sophy "to see a wedding without young people; I sha'nt think you more than half married." However, I have already as many witnesses of my conduct, as my vigilance can elude, and you are the only

only person, except Wentworth and my own family, whose presence would not be a punishment to me.

What gives me most uneasiness, is a whim of the Dean's, in which he is strongly seconded by my grandfather and grandmother. He insists strenuously on our being married in church, and refuses to perform the ceremony on other conditions.

We have had great controversies on the subject, and I have been harrassed to death with learned dissertations. But yesterday he went still further, and thought proper, to my great mortification, to discuss this point in the pulpit, preaching with great vehemence at our pew, in the face of the whole congregation, which was very numerous. I was, indeed, highly provoked, and extremely angry with Lord Archer, who could not without the utmost difficulty refrain from laughing at the Dean's discourse, and my evident displeasure.

I believe, however, I must yield;—of late I am become an adept in the practice



of implicit obedience—an excellent preparation for the matrimonial state.

I have written to my father and given directions about settlements—you will be surprized at my interference on this subject; but it is prudent to provide against contingencies.

Ah, Henrietta, if I could but realize the delusions of those lying varlets, the poets, and procure one little draught from the Lethean spring to wash from my bosom some melancholy remembrances!—But I am not of the humour of those heroines, who go sighing and whining from the first page of the romance to the last.—In every distress and anxiety, I derive great comfort from Aunt Sophy's favourite adage—"it will be all one, an hundred years hence"—and console myself with the reflection, that it is no visionary oblivion which awaits our sorrows in the grave!

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

LET.

## L E T T E R LXII.

*From the Same to the Same.*

**H**ENRIETTA, my heart revolts against this union—can the event of it be fortunate! But I am to the last degree whimsical and superstitious, and my spirits are agitated by every trifling incident.

Yet does not my situation appear enviable to the misjudging world? Has not fortune profusely poured her favours on my head! Possessed of youth and health—of friends whose affection constitutes the dearest blessing I enjoy—on the point of being united to a most amiable man—still as the idea recurs, my blood creeps with a freezing chillness through my veins. Why this strange reluctance!—I do not—I cannot continue to love the destroyer of my peace!—What a contrariety is the human heart!—mine is no longer Bloomfield's, but it can never be another's.—Nor have

I even the consolation of being able to reconcile my conduct with those principles of rectitude and candour, by which, till now, it has been invariably directed. I cannot forgive myself the deceit I am continually endeavouring to practise.—I abhor dissimulation—yet is not my conduct one uninterrupted falshood!—But my doom is determined — and reflection, far from soothing my anxieties with a prospect of future peace, augments my distresses, by convincing me they are irremediable.

I said I was whimsical, but I blush to acknowledge the degree to which I carry my weakness. I have had a head-ach all this day, and in the evening my grandmother desired me to try the air—Lord Archer joined his persuasions—we went alone, and wandered through the Park along the borders of the river, till we reached the romantic glen through which it winds in serpentine mazes. The rocks which projected above our heads, were gilt by the beams of the setting sun, and the silence of the scene was only interrupted by the



the waving of the branches, and the river murmuring through its rocky channel.—I seated myself on a fragment of disjointed rock, and whilst I sunk into a deep reverie, fancy recalled to my mind the series of little incidents by which this favourite spot was once distinguished.—My Henrietta, virtue is not severe and unfeeling—it reproves not the tear that falls on the grave of some once dear companion! Similar to this are my sensations—my tears flow to the memory of what Bloomfield was—it is a tribute I pay to his departed virtue,—but were it possible that his extinguished affection could once more revive, I should reject his offered hand with horror!—Friendship is the only basis on which a permanent passion can be founded—but mine is lost to him for ever!

Yet whilst my memory wandered over “the *pleasing past*,” my mind was pervaded by a transient serenity. My imagination once more presented its favourite object—I almost fancied I saw him sitting amongst the wild broom at my feet—how often has

he passed whole hours in that attitude! at that instant too, I listened to the effusions of tenderness—but they flowed not from the lips of Bloomfield!—I started at the sound of Lord Archer's voice with emotions of surprize and confusion. He darted at me an enquiring look—conscious of the impropriety of my ideas, I felt myself glow with shame and turned from his examining eyes. We both sat some minutes silent—when resuming his tenderness, he took my hand and entreated me to return. “The dew begins to fall,” continued he, “and I believe you have received no benefit from the air.”

We arose, and leaving the glen, struck into the path that leads homewards, through the wilderness. As we approached the cascade, I saw a man start suddenly from the ground on which he had been sitting, and retire into the wilderness with great precipitation. He wore a surtout which reached almost to his feet, and a large hat flapped over his face as if to conceal it—yet I caught an

an air—a resemblance—Henrietta, as he fled, I fancied it was Bloomfield !

I trembled excessively, which Lord Archer imputed to surprize and my illness.—We approached the place he had quitted, and found an ivory tablet in the grass. Judge with what trepidation I opened it. The lines it contained appeared to have been just written—and from some erasures and interlineations we concluded them to be original. I will transcribe them in this place.

Are these the shades—are these the envied scenes—

The fairy paths thro' which my childhood stray'd ?  
What desolating blast deforms the plains,  
And blights the bosom of the flow'ry mead !

No cooling western airs around me play,

Though tir'd and faint my wearied footsteps roam ;  
No red-breast sooths me with his sprightly lay,  
Though twilight bids me seek my cheerless home.

What troublous visions float around my couch,

If transient slumbers close my heavy eyes ;  
Terrific forms in dread array approach,  
Pale spectres glare—and ghastly phantoms rise !

Go—gentle sleep ! go sooth the spotless maid ;  
Whose tranquil soul was ne'er by grief oppress'd ;



Go—gentle sleep, to yonder happy shade,  
And fold my Delia to your downy breast !

Then, whilst your pleasing sway detains my fair,  
Her loveliest landscapes let gay fancy trace ;  
To Delia's view let angel forms appear,  
Pure as her soul, and beauteous as her face !

Ah!—now I find no blast deforms the plain—  
Sweet are the woodbines round these elms entwin'd,  
But drear and desolate the brightest scene,  
View'd through the medium of a wounded mind.

Oh! were I doomed in gloomy mines to toil,  
Blest by no radiant beam of golden light,  
My lovely Delia's bright angelic smile  
Would chase the horrors of eternal night !

Her smile—but why, alas! should Delia smile  
On the lost victim of her cold disdain !  
Why would the flatterer, Hope, my woes beguile,  
And with her fond delusions sooth my pain !—

Bright are the tints that point th' etherial bow—  
Bright is the radiance of the evening sky—  
But still more bright Hope's vivid pictures glow,  
And still more swift her dear deceptions fly.

Yet let me to her whispers lend mine ear,  
And let the Syren paint my Delia kind ;  
Seraphic views shall at her call appear  
And scenes celestial sooth my tortur'd mind !

It was written with a pencil, and so faint as to be scarcely intelligible—and yet I fancied the hand resembled Bloomfield's. Lord Archer said, with a smile, that the stranger was undoubtedly some rejected swain of mine, who was come to deplore my cruelty, and pour forth his strains of elegiac sadness, in these desert wilds.

We laid the tablet on the grass, imagining its owner would return to seek it, and, as it was late, hastened homewards.

Bloomfield! impossible! does not the vast Atlantic roll its waves between us!—Or though it did not, has he not blotted me from his thoughts for ever—could he accuse me of disdain and coldness? What a romantic suggestion!

When I got home, I sent Jenny with directions to bring me the tablet, if it was still in the place where we had left it.—She returned and brought it to me—it is now in my possession.

I cannot drive this little incident from my thoughts—Next Thursday—would to heaven it were over! My efforts to appear

cheerful in company, encreases the dejection of my spirits when alone.

Lord Archer will go to town on Tuesday, and return on Wednesday evening—If you could accompany him—but I know it is impossible, farewell.

Farewel, my Henrietta, pity and pray for your devoted

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

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L E T T E R    LXIII.

*Colonel Bloomfield to Julia.*

Sunday night.

**I**F it were possible for your brother to forget his sorrows, your letter would have bestowed the delightful oblivion! But your generous tenderness lightens the burden it does not wholly remove, and I cannot think myself completely unfortunate, whilst dear to the amiable heart of my beloved Julia. No, my sister, you shall



shall not devote your time to me ; you have drawn a pleasing picture, but you shall realize it with a more eligible companion. Heaven gave not such virtues as yours to be buried in obscurity ; you shall bless with your heart some worthy man who will receive it with rapture, and your union will be productive of more permanent felicity than the unmarried state can possibly confer. Then you may build temples to the chaste divinity, but no Cupid shall be offered at her shrine ; for as Lucina, you shall invoke her aid. When you are a wife, my Julia, you will wish to become a mother. I hope to see you surrounded by many a fair transcript of your own perfections, and to assist you in teaching them to imitate their lovely parent.

Has your candid bosom ever concealed a thought from your brother ? Have we not from our earliest infancy mutually reposed the most unlimited confidence !—have not our hearts been transparent to each other's view ! Yet mine, false as it is to our friendship, wishes at this instant to veil its secrets

crets from your eyes; it shrinks from your inspection, and dreads the gentle remonstrances your tenderness may dictate.—Your suspicions were just—my expedition was to Ireland.—Yes, Julia—I have seen her—I have seen the faithless Delia! How lovely she looked! Why is the sweet innocence of her countenance contrasted by the falseness of her heart?

Impelled by a curiosity I could neither restrain nor combat, I left Dublin the morning after I landed, and arrived in the evening at an inn in the neighbourhood of Bloomfield. I had no fixed intention of going thither, and determined to keep my return from America a profound secret. As the next day was Sunday, I conjectured I should see the family at church, and this I most ardently desired. Early in the morning I arose and muffling myself in my furtout and a large flapped hat, went into the church as soon as it was opened. I walked about the aisles and read the inscriptions on the tombs; the employment was adapted to the gloomy colour of my ideas;

ideas; I descended into the family vault, and paid the tribute of a tear to the memory of our lamented parents.

I returned from those dreary mansions of the dead, and placed myself in an obscure corner of the church. My eyes were fixed on the folding-doors, my heart throbbed with expectation every time they croaked on their rusty hinges. At length they appeared—the venerable pair—Mrs. Bloomfield, Lady Harriot and Delia. The pew I was placed in was at no great distance from theirs—fortunately no one was near enough to observe my emotion.—Oh Julia, my weakness was even greater than I apprehended!

Delia is yet more lovely than when we parted—though her complexion has lost its dazzling brilliancy. She is taller, and has acquired an air of greater dignity—but still retains the same attractive innocence, the same seducing sweetness,—and yet I think her eyes have lost their former fire.

Was it the “dim religious light,” faintly beaming through the gothic windows,

dows, that diffused over her appearance that affecting air of pensive sadness?

During the service I was sensible to no other object. When it was over, I followed her with my eyes, till I could no longer discern her. Involved in a kind of stupefaction, I remained in the church till every other being had deserted it, and then perceiving myself alone, I returned by unfrequented paths to the inn. I threw myself on the bed and abandoned myself to the most gloomy reflections. In the evening I arose, and as I traversed the apartment, often from a window that looked towards Bloomfield, cast wistful glances, I felt myself seized with an irresistible desire to review those once delightful scenes, the witnesses of my past felicity!

I left the house and soon arrived at the park wall, which with some difficulty I cleared. I ranged through the improvements, every object recalled to my memory some affecting circumstance. The little woodbines I had planted, hung in luxuriant festoons around the grotto, I had  
helped



helped to decorate. I entered that grotto, once the sweet retreat of love and innocence—Ah, with what altered sensations I contemplated the scenes around me—the soft enchantment was dissolved—the paradise was “darken’d to a dreary vale of tears!”

I felt myself fatigued and threw myself on the turf that borders a rough cascade—a venerable oak extended its branches over my head—my distance from the house, I imagined, secured me from interruption. The gushing of the water—the departing sun beams glittering on its surface—the placid glow that seemed diffused over the face of nature, restored to my mind a melancholy serenity—these scenes recalled my juvenile ideas—all my tenderness revived—I scribbled in my tablets, something like an elegy—but the only remembrance I now retain of it is, that it was expressive of disappointed affection.

I still held the tablets in my hand—my mind was busied in forming a thousand schemes—I sometimes determined to go directly

rectly to the house, as if to visit relations who had never forfeited their right to my respect—and to suffer my future conduct to be entirely influenced by Delia's reception of me—I was awakened from my reverie by the sound of voices close beside me. I fled with precipitation into the winding of a thicket, and when I had concealed myself behind some trees, I turned to examine the persons by whom I had been surprized, and beheld Miss Bloomfield, accompanied by a gentleman I had never seen. They approached the place I had quitted—they stopped—looked after me, and seemed by their gestures to converse of me. Delia stooped and took something from the ground; it was my tablets which I had dropt in my confusion, but there was nothing written in them besides the little elegy; she opened them and endeavoured, I believe, to read it. I was at too great a distance to distinguish the features of the person who accompanied her, and could only perceive that his dress was elegant, and his air was noble;—as  
he

he stood beside her, I saw him raise her hand to his lips—Oh Julia, your tranquil breast has never felt the pangs of jealousy ! It was with difficulty that I repressed my rage—scarce had my reason power to prevent me from rushing from my retreat.—After a few minutes, they struck into the path that leads to the house ; but as they walked, Delia often turned and looked towards the place where I lay concealed, till the windings of the path hid it from her view.

I returned to the inn in a frame of mind of which you can form no adequate conception.—Still the image of this stranger haunts my imagination. Is this the lover for whom I was abandoned !—Tortured with curiosity, yet afraid to indulge it—I dread to make enquiries into the affairs of this family, lest my emotion should betray the interest I take in them, and am apprehensive, besides, of being recollected by the host or his wife, who knew me since a boy ; though the alteration of my appearance has hitherto concealed me from their know-

knowledge; so totally indeed is that appearance changed, that my Julia, when we meet, will scarcely recognize the features of her brother.

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All this day I have waited impatiently for an opportunity of acquiring the information I so earnestly desire. I have given Johnson, who attends me, his instructions. He is prudent and faithful, and wants not sagacity.

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Monday evening.

I have attained my wish—I have gained the desired intelligence—my destiny is now inevitably fixed—no glimpse of hope remains—yet has she not long been lost—irrecoverably lost to me.—The son of Lady Harriot! Conviction flashes on my mind!—My Delia has been betrayed—deceived—deluded—But she is not yet married.—Shall I submit to this base—this shameful imposition—Why do I thus skulk in disguise



guise—let guilt seek concealments—this instant I will go to Bloomfield—my doom shall be ratified at least by Delia's lips. Heavens, why am I thus agitated! is it the wine I have drank in an unusual quantity!—No matter—my resolution is formed—and if I meet my rival!—Julia, if we never more must meet, O remember with compassion the frailties of your unhappy brother, —vindicate his fame from every base aspersion, and let the recollection of his tenderness expiate his faults!

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## L E T T E R    L X I V .

*Lady Harriot Bloomfield to Lady Wharton.*

Monday evening.

**B**UT two days more, Maria, and my wishes will be accomplished—why then am I thus anxiously solicitous—thus fearfully apprehensive!—I, who for years have

have cherished this favourite project in my breast—can I not wait with patience the few—the very few hours which now retard the fruition of my hopes? Each moment as it glides imperceptibly away, shortens the term of my anxieties.

This evening the family are engaged on a visit in the neighbourhood—I excused myself from attending them, pleased with an opportunity of enjoying the pleasure of a solitary walk, and revolving in my mind some affairs which are yet to be arranged. I expect their return immediately—Delia's averseness from this union—Almighty powers! This horrid spectre?—Is it not the phantom of my disturbed imagination!

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Monday night.

Oh Maria! in what a scene have I been engaged!

I wrote in the garden drawing-room.—I heard the door opened—but imagining it was one of the domestics, I raised not my eyes until the person who entered, stood immediately before me.—I looked up and beheld

beheld a spectre—Gracious heaven, it was Bloomfield!—His tresses dishevelled—his dress disordered—his countenance pale—wild and haggard! His eyes, glaring with a frantic fury, were rivetted on me. I sunk backwards in my seat, and he seemed to behold my surprize and consternation with a malicious joy.

“ You appear astonished, Madam,” said he; “ I fear I have intruded ?”

“ This honour, Sir,” said I, in hesitating accents, endeavouring to recover my fortitude, “ was so unexpected that—”

“ And so unwished for, Madam, you might have added”—interrupted he with a sarcastic smile—I was unable to reply.

“ But,” he continued, “ I could not determine to leave this kingdom without paying my devoirs to your ladyship.”

“ You are extremely obliging, Sir,—“ was your visit then to me ?”

“ Undoubtedly, Madam, I know no lady to whom I am under so many obligations; and I could not deprive myself of the pleasure of expressing the  
“ very

“ very deep sense I entertain of them ; and  
“ congratulating you at the same time, on  
“ the approaching aggrandizement of your  
“ family.”

“ The aggrandizement of my family,  
“ Sir ?”

“ Yes, Madam, by your son’s approach-  
“ ing union with Miss Bloomfield.”

“ Won’t you be seated, Sir ?”

“ I will, Madam ; I intend not that our  
“ conversation should end thus abruptly ;  
“ and will have the honour of sitting next  
“ you, if you will permit me.”

He placed himself beside me on the sofa, and his penetrating eyes seemed to search the bottom of my heart. I easily perceived his levity was affected. — The wildness of his looks and the oddity of his manner terrified me into an opinion, that he was distracted. I conceived some hopes from the idea. As you had been my only confidante, I knew he could produce no positive evidence against me ; and if he should meet Delia, whose return I every instant expected—whatever imputations he  
might



might lay to my charge, I determined to attribute to his own insanity.

“Your ladyship,” he resumed — endeavouring to suppress his passion as he spoke, “is undoubtedly a most exemplary mother! — you have played your game admirably — and it must be acknowledged, are peculiarly dexterous in the art of shuffling.”

“Your conduct, Sir, is altogether so extraordinary, and your words so ambiguous, that —”

“O Madam, ambiguous as they are, I doubt not you have a little *monitor within*, which will assist you in interpreting them!”

I no longer flattered myself that my artifices were undiscovered — and could with difficulty prevent myself from sinking to the earth.

“Must I then speak more plainly to your hardened heart?” cried he, grasping my arm with a look of phrenzy, — must I upbraid you with my wrongs! Have you not destroyed my peace? —

“ blasted my opening prospects of felicity!  
“ Tell me, thou sorceress! by what ac-  
“ cursed arts—by what magic philters hast  
“ thou contrived to alienate from me the  
“ affections of my Delia! to fix them on  
“ your—”

His rage—his emotion permitted him not to conclude the sentence,—he started from me, and as suddenly returning.

“ Ha!” cried he, observing my dreadful agitation, “ is this the fortitude of conscious virtue?—Is the deadly paleness  
“ on thy cheek the emblem of innocence!”

The conviction I received from his words that my plots, though suspected, were still undiscovered, inspired me with courage.

“ Confess! confess!” cried he, still grasping my arm with the same frantic wildness.

“ That you have greatly astonished and  
“ alarmed me,” replied I, with all the composure I could assume, “ I do con-  
“ fess, and if fear were a certain indication  
“ of guilt, my innocence might with justice  
“ be suspected. However, timid as I am,  
“ and

“ and irresolute by nature, I am not so  
“ very weak as to be terrified into a con-  
“ fession of imagined crimes. You are  
“ generous, Mr. Bloomfield, you are just  
“ and noble ; and when this passion sub-  
“ sides, when reason resumes her empire—  
“ you will reflect with shame and contrition  
“ on this injurious and unworthy treat-  
“ ment of a person, who never merited  
“ your resentment.”

“ O woman !” he exclaimed—“ smooth  
“ —deceitful and perfidious ! Have you  
“ not laid the basis of your son’s advance-  
“ ment on the destruction of my peace ?—  
“ Have you not sacrificed my first—my  
“ only love—my too complying Delia !  
“ to your wild ambition—to your detested  
“ avarice ! Take,” cried he, with a still  
more frantic air—“ take the prey that al-  
“ lured you !—I renounce—I despise it !  
“ —Take her large possessions and her  
“ ample fortunes—confer them on your  
“ son, and give me back the jewel you  
“ have robbed me of—give me the heart  
“ of my Delia !—But I rave ! can’t thou

“ return it inviolate!—is it not stained  
“ with falsehood? Is it not blackened with  
“ perfidy?”

“ You do indeed rave, Mr. Bloomfield,”  
said I, “ and most sincerely do I compas-  
“ sionate the tumults of your soul.”

“ Compassionate!—Oh, I know your  
“ compassion!—So the serpent compas-  
“ sionates the helpless animal that writhes  
“ in its impoisoned folds!—If you would  
“ have me believe you innocent, convince  
“ me by disproving my assertions. Con-  
“ vince me that Delia still loves me,—that  
“ she has never violated her plighted faith  
“ —that the alliance between your son and  
“ her, is but a vague report.—Nor till  
“ you do this, will I believe you inno-  
“ cent!”

“ Then,” said I, “ I must still be con-  
“ demned to appear guilty in your eyes.”

“ It is true then,” returned he, “ that  
“ Delia has eternally renounced me?—  
“ Well—that I already knew—but that  
“ she consents to be the wife of your son—  
“ Heavens! shall I tamely suffer a base  
“ usurper



“usurper to ravish from me my rights !  
“Have I not drawn this sword in the  
“cause of my country, and shall I not  
“now unsheath it in my own ! Where is  
“this favoured lover ?”

“Is it from me,” replied I, “that you  
“require this information ! Must the hand  
“of a mother point your weapon to the  
“bosom of her son ?”

“Rather should it be directed to your  
“own—and, but that humanity forbids  
“us to crush the contemptible worm—  
“Tremble not,” said he, perceiving my  
perturbation, “No — mad as you have  
“made me, your breast is safe ;—it shall  
“only be wounded through that of your  
“son !”

“Why this unjust resentment—” re-  
plied I, “this implacable animosity ?—If  
“Delia, young and by nature volatile, has  
“lightly plighted vows which she wanted  
“constancy to adhere to, why is her error  
“attributed to me ? If I had merited  
“your cruelly unjust suspicions—if I had  
“estranged from you the affections of

“ Delia, with an artful intention of attaching them to my son—would I have suffered that son to remain on the Continent, exiled for years from her presence?—If on his return—when your long absence had induced me to believe you no longer remembered or regretted her frailty, I saw with satisfaction a growing partiality between her and my son—if for this I am to be condemned, what mother would not be guilty !”

“ If you then, are innocent,” replied he, “ she is the most perfidious—the most ungrateful — inhuman ! — worthless girl ! Where is she ? When will she return ?— Never will I leave this house until I see her—until I upbraid her with her falsehood !”

Oh ! Maria, think how I shuddered at this dreadful resolution, which he uttered with a steady and determined air. Every instant I expected their return—ages of happiness would have been dearly purchased with the horrors of this interview !

“ You

“ You appear so greatly disturbed at  
“ present,” said I, in a faltering voice,—  
“ that—”

“ That I had best go home and compose  
“ myself—” interrupted he with quick-  
ness—“ Oh how I thank you for your  
“ kind attention! What! that your la-  
“ dyship may gain time to spin some new  
“ web to entangle me, and provide for the  
“ safety of your son!”

“ For the safety of my son,” said I,  
“ I am under no apprehension. He is  
“ able to protect himself without my in-  
“ tervention. It is on your account alone  
“ that I wish you not to meet. I pity your  
“ unhappy passion — but, unworthy as  
“ Delia has evinced herself of an affection  
“ so faithful, I know your tenderness and  
“ generosity will never permit you to  
“ pierce a heart that is dear to her—to be-  
“ come the object of her horror and de-  
“ testation!”

“ Oh!” cried he, flinging himself on  
the sofa, and covering his face with his  
hands—“ her horror and detestation!—

“ Ah! — am I not already sufficiently  
“ undone!”

It was growing dusky and the windows were open;—a sweet strain of harmony stole on our ears—It was Delia’s voice—we both started—I saw her at a distance in the walk that fronts the window—my son was with her—she leaned on his arm as she sung.

“ Ha, that angel voice!” cried Bloomfield, “ it is she, it is my Delia!” He flew to the window—“ Distraction!—Horror!  
“ —my rival!”

I dreaded his leaping out of the window and flying to them.—That instant, Maria, was the crisis of my fate.

“ It is Miss Bloomfield and my son,” said I, collecting all my fortitude—“ I  
“ rejoice at their return—Delia shall now  
“ vindicate my conduct from the heavy  
“ aspersions you have thrown on it,—from  
“ her own lips you now shall hear—.”

“ A confession of her passion for my  
“ rival?”

“ You



“ You must not behold Lord Archer  
“ in that light.—He will esteem your vir-  
“ tues and do justice to your merit. His  
“ friendship and compassion.”

“ —I disclaim—I abhor them!—But  
“ I see your artifice—you would detain me  
“ to swell the triumph of my rival.”

“ I would detain you, it is true,” said I,  
“ but not to swell the triumph of my son,  
“ for, beloved as he is, by Delia, it re-  
“ quires no augmentation; but I would  
“ force you to listen to my justification,  
“ and after the unjust and cruel treatment  
“ I have this night received from you.”

“ By heaven I will not stay,” cried he,  
“ would you drive me to desperation !”

“ Will you then come to-morrow?”  
said I, fully persuaded that the most effec-  
tual method of securing his absence, was  
that of appearing desirous of his presence.

“ No!” cried he sternly.

“ Or perhaps the day after?”

“ No—” interrupted he, snatching his  
hat from the table, “ No, never—never  
“ more will I enter these detested walls!

“ Oh ! that a poignard had pierced my  
“ heart, the hour I first beheld them !”

As he concluded the sentence, he rushed furiously out of the room, and I saw him no more.—No longer, indeed, was I capable of discerning any object—for my spirits, hitherto sustained by the anxiety of my mind, now totally forsook me, and I sunk in a swoon on the floor. My son and Delia, who entered immediately afterwards, raised me in their arms, and brought me to life. I looked at Delia, and perceived by her countenance, that she knew not of Bloomfield’s visit. Revived by this assurance, I flattered myself I might still conceal it.

I imputed my illness to a cold I had got by sitting on the grass in the park—I found it easy to deceive them—and I have the satisfaction to find, that Bloomfield was not observed by any of the domestics.

—Still, Maria, my soul is haunted with the most dreadful apprehensions. Oh ! if the sword of Bloomfield should pierce the bosom of my son !

If

If the path of human life is dreary and perplexed—if even the most virtuous find it gloomy and disconsolate—Oh ! how deep must be its darkness to the wretch who has voluntarily forfeited the sunshine of the blameless heart ! the magnanimity of conscious rectitude !

HARRIOT BLOOMFIELD.

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## LETTER LXV.

*Lord Archer to Lord Revell\*.*

Merrion-square,  
Tuesday night.

**W**OULD it not be unpardonable, Revell, in a fellow in my circumstances, on the eve of being raised to prosperity so unexpected—to happiness so apparently complete, to sit down, like the

\* Some letters between these friends, have been omitted, as they contain little more than a repetition of what has been already related.

Cynic in his tub, and growl at the infelicity of human life! Yet, to my shame be it spoken, I never felt a stronger propensity to snarling than at this present moment. I am dissatisfied with the world—with myself, and with Delia. With the world, for deluding my imagination with specious promises of felicity, which it can never confer; with myself, for being such a blockhead as to be deceived by its allusions; and with Delia most of all. Whatever the motives which induce her to consent to an union with me, may be, that she loves me not, is but too apparent.

I left Bloomfield this morning, in order to procure a special licence, and to arrange some preliminaries with Mr. Bloomfield; and instead of being in the least affected at our separation, I thought she saw me prepare for my departure with an air of satisfaction. Extremely chagrined at her coldness, I bade her adieu with a restrained and fullen air. She considered me attentively for a moment, and, as if awakened by my manners to a sense of impropriety in her  
own



own conduct, held out her hand to me with that sweet benignant smile, which renders her words irresistible, and entreated me to hasten my return.

“ Ah Delia,” cried I, pressing her offered hand to my lips, “ is this solicitude for my return really dictated by tenderness !”

She perfectly understood me, and withdrawing her hand with some resentment, “ I am not conscious,” said she, “ of having given your lordship reason to doubt my esteem ; on the contrary----”

“ Your *lordship* and *esteem* !” said I, “ is this the language of affection !”

“ Perhaps,” said she, deeply blushing as she spoke, “ perhaps my heart is not susceptible of that warm return, your affection merits ; perhaps I am cold and insensible ! If I am, it is the defect of my nature ; if the most fervent esteem, the most decided preference, if to be assured you are the man on earth my judgment most approves.”

“ But

“ But does the heart,” interrupted I, with quickness, “ always act in concert with the judgment ?”

A blush still deeper overspread her face, she turned from me and leaned it against the window she stood at. After a pause of a few moments——

“ I am at a loss to conceive the meaning of your lordship’s innuendo,” said she, turning to me with an air of dignity, “ had my consent to your wishes been induced by parental authority----

“ Ah Delia,” cried I, “ it was influenced by motives more generous ! By friendship for Lady Harriot, and compassion for her son ! But I abhor the selfish passion which would sacrifice the peace of a beloved object, to its own gratification. You may still retract, and if it is essential to your tranquility, let me conjure you to take this step before it be too late !”

She was unspeakably affected and trembled violently. I threw my arms round her to support her ; she leaned her face on my

my shoulder and her tears flowed on my breast.

“ Believe me, Archer,” said she, raising her head and speaking with earnestness ;  
“ believe me, I wish not to retract.  
“ Though I cannot render myself unworthy your affection, by counterfeiting a  
“ passion which I do not feel, I may with  
“ the most strict sincerity assure you, that  
“ my heart reveres your virtues ; that the  
“ admiration which the refinement and generosity of your sentiments excite in my  
“ breast, encreases my prepossession in your  
“ favour, and convinces me of the propriety of my choice. Each revolving  
“ year will heighten an attachment, which  
“ has reason for its basis, and if it should  
“ ever arrive at a degree of fervor adequate to your wishes, how much more  
“ permanent will it prove than those transient passions, the offspring of fancy and  
“ caprice ; these may shine, for an instant, with the false glare of a meteor ; but  
“ like a fixed star, the other will extend  
“ its

“ its influence even to the evening of de-  
“ clining life !

Oh, Revell, had you beheld the expres-  
sion that animated her features as she spoke,  
you would not have been surprized at the  
rapture with which I pressed her to my  
heart, or the reluctance with which I bade  
her adieu !

The day previous to my arrival in town,  
Lady Harriot shewed me a letter which  
Mr. Bloomfield received some time ago  
from his daughter. I shall transcribe one  
passage, and leave you to judge if I have  
drawn a flattering portrait of my Delia's  
mind. “ Let the man whom you have  
“ destined to be your son-in-law, be treated  
“ with generosity. To such treatment  
“ Lord Archer is doubly entitled, no less  
“ by his intrinsic merit, than his affinity  
“ to Lady Harriot. Let him have what-  
“ ever sum may be requisite to clear his  
“ estate, and let it not be encumbered  
“ with fortunes for children, which may  
“ prevent him from being master of his  
“ own property, or disqualify him from  
“ making



“ making an advantageous settlement on a  
“ second wife, if he should survive me ;  
“ and the lives of women are always pre-  
“ carious. On my own part, I remit every  
“ thing to you, and only desire that I may  
“ be absolute mistress of ten thousand  
“ pounds, either to give during my life,  
“ or bequeath at my death, as occasion  
“ may require.”

Some men, perhaps, might be dissatisfied with this reserve; this clause of ten thousand pounds; on the contrary, I applaud it. Mr. Bloomfield is displeased at it, and says, it will be only devoting so much money to, what he is pleased to call, her profusion; and expresses a doubt if any of his own descendants will ever be advantaged by it. These are the contracted maxims of a mercenary world; and Delia, with such a fortune as she possesses, would have been wanting to herself, if she had voluntarily deprived herself of the power of indulging the generous propensities of her benevolent heart. It is against her father's worldly prudence she has guarded ;  
and

and reserves to herself the capacity of securing to me, that affluence and independence, which she fears his liberality would not induce him to confer.

To-morrow I return to Bloomfield; and the day following am to receive the hand of Delia. Never was there so partial a lover as your friend; but for the intervention of the wise ones, I believe we should have gone on for half a year longer in the sentimental way, without ever dreaming of the matrimonial ceremony.

In time I hope this cold, this frozen heart will melt before the warmth of my affection; and methinks I could wait with pleasure for such a revolution. Ah, were it once effected, with what rapture would I fly

—“ To meet and mingle souls,  
“ And wear the joyful chain!”

Adieu.

ARCHER.

LET-

## L E T T E R    L X V I .

*Colonel Bloomfield to Julia.*

Wednesday.

**J**ULIA, I tremble to reflect on the distress in which my last letter may have involved you. Nothing but the frenzy which possessed my mind, when I concluded it, can extenuate the cruelty of wounding your gentle affectionate bosom, with the dreadful apprehensions it was calculated to inspire.

On Monday I eat nothing all day, and in the evening found myself seized with an unquenchable thirst. I called for drink, and Johnson brought me Maderia and water. The poor fellow perceived my spirits were low, and I suppose hoped to animate them by persuading me, the beverage he brought me was weak, when, from the effect it produced on my spirits, I am convinced, it was chiefly wine. Whilst he attended me,  
I observed

I observed our host and his wife were seated on a bench, in the court, and judging this might be a favourable opportunity, I sent him to them with instructions to learn all the intelligence he possibly could, relative to the Bloomfield family, and their visitors and connections. As one of my windows opened directly over the place where they sat. I could hear distinctly every word they uttered. To diminish your surprize at the effect it produced, I will give you the dialogue in their own words, as nearly as I can recollect them.

Johnson began by enquiring to whom the fine old castle on the side of the hill, belonged? The lower classes of the Irish are extremely loquacious and communicative; my host justified this observation.

“ That house,” said he, “ is the property of Sir Richard Bloomfield, my  
“ landlord, and a very worthy gentleman  
“ he is, as any in the three counties. He  
“ has but one son, and he is a Parliament  
“ man, (I voted for him at the last elec-  
“ tion) and he’s pretty well advanced in  
“ life;



“ life ; let me see ; I’m sure he can’t be  
“ less than six or seven and forty ; aye,  
“ he is thereabouts, for I remember when  
“ I was but a young *garsoon*.

“ Has he ever been married ?” asked  
Johnsōn.

“ Married ! aye, and that he has ; no less  
“ than twice ; his first wife died in a year  
“ or two after they were married, and left  
“ him one daughter ; as pretty a creature  
“ as you’d see in a summer’s day, and as  
“ good as she’s handsome, Lord bless her.”

“ That she is,” rejoined the wife ;  
“ it was but the other day there, that she  
“ went out in the middle of the night, her-  
“ self and old Madam Bloomfield, to Nell  
“ Dougherty’s cabbin, that was on her  
“ dying bed, and took away her two or-  
“ phints in the coach along with her.”

“ Aye so she did ; God bless her sweet  
“ face !” said mine host. “ But she’ll  
“ have money enough ; for the second  
“ Madam has brought the *square* no chil-  
“ dren, and so she’ll come in for all.  
“ Though I heard lawyer Darby say, the  
“ other

“ other day, that if she has no children,  
“ the estate will go to a distant relation of  
“ the same name. I remember him very  
“ well; he used to live whole months at  
“ Bloomfield, and often has he stopped  
“ here, when he went out a fowling.  
“ There was a great talk of a match be-  
“ tween him and the young mistress.”

“ Aye,” said the wife, “ and a sweet  
“ young gentleman he was! Every body  
“ spoke of it; it was a thousand pities!”

“ And what prevented it?” said Johnson.

“ Nobody knows; the poor young gen-  
“ tleman went away to fight the Bostonians;  
“ and Madam Bloomfield took Miss Delia  
“ off with her, to some foreign part; and  
“ then when she brought her home again,  
“ every body thought she’d die; and there  
“ she used to be riding up the mountains  
“ and drinking the goats whey; and she  
“ used to look so *molloncholy* like, that I  
“ thought she’d never come to good; and  
“ I used to meet her wandering about the  
“ hills, for all the world like Kate Kinshe-  
“ lagh, that *drownded* herself, when Paddy  
“ Flannegan,

"Flannegan, was pressed for a soldier.

"It is a terrible thing to be crossed in

"love!"

(You, Julia, will smile at this simple harangue; but far different were the sensations with which I listened to it; I was softened even to the tenderness of a child).

"But," continued my hostess, "she has got a new lover now; and a fine stately gentleman he is, and a Lord too; though for my part, I liked our young *square* better."

"A Lord?" said Johnson, "what is his title?"

"Lord Archer, they call him," said the host; "he is Madam Bloomfield's son by her first husband. The *servants* was a telling me, he has no great matter of money; but she'll have enough for them both."

"Has he been long in this country?" said Johnson.

"Yes," said the wife, "backwards and forwards, to and fro, between this and Dublin, ever since Christmas. They are



“ are to be married next Thursday, as  
“ Mrs. Matty, old Madam Bloomfield’s  
“ waiting gentlewoman was a telling of  
“ me, last night. There was a great *hub-*  
“ *hub* at the castle about it; the old quality  
“ would not consent, because he had not  
“ money enough; and then Madam Bloom-  
“ field came down from Dublin, and so  
“ she made up matters for her son to be  
“ sure, and they are to be married in the  
“ parish church, but we must keep that a  
“ secret, for *fraid* of bringing the country  
“ people there.”

I could bear to hear no more; all my  
past suspicions of Lady Harriot, were now  
confirmed to certainty. I no longer doubted  
that the unsuspecting Delia had suffered  
herself to become the dupe of her artifices,  
and that I was the victim of her pride and  
• avarice. The violence of my perturbation  
increased my thirst. I drank in great  
quantities, and the frantic resolution my  
last letter informed you of, was the effect  
of the delirium that the wine, co-operating  
with the agitation of my spirits, produced.

Undressed



Undressed and unattended, I flew to Bloomfield—a thousand varying passions distracted my breast, as I approached it. Dark and horrid were the purposes I revolved in my mind!—my thoughts were even stained with blood! I knew all the avenues of the house, and entered it through the gardens, unperceived by the domestics. I crossed the hall, and flew to the drawing-room, to which Delia was accustomed to retire, at this hour of the evening, to enjoy the rays of the setting sun. I opened the door, and saw a female figure—it was Lady Harriot. Fired with indignation, at the idea of wrongs which I am now almost persuaded were ideal, I treated her in a manner, which I cannot recollect without the deepest confusion. Though greatly alarmed and terrified by my frantic extravagance; she bore my upbraidings and invectives, with the utmost gentleness and compassion. I saw Delia with her lover at a distance, in the garden—I heard her voice—inspired with rage and jealousy, I was on the point of flying to them—when Lady

Harriot expressed her pleasure at their approach—and pressed me to stay to hear her vindication from Delia's lips. Could Delia pronounce her vindication, without condemning herself—without acknowledging her falsehood to me—and her passion for my rival?—The idea was madness! I retain but a confused and imperfect remembrance of the manner in which I left the house, nor did I recover my recollection until I found myself at four miles distance from it in a wood by moonlight.

Already wretched—I required not this painful retrospect—this consciousness of rashness little short of insanity, to aggravate my misery and embitter my feelings! Involved in the most gloomy reflections—I ranged through the wood until the day began to break—and then suddenly recollecting, that Johnson would be terrified at my absence, I returned to the inn.—I found him waiting up for me.—He was alarmed at the distraction of my appearance, and perceived I was in a high fever. He entreated me to be blooded, and, when  
to

to indulge him, I consented, he performed the operation with great dexterity ; for in America he used to assist the surgeons in the care of the sick and wounded.

All the next day I continued extremely ill — towards evening, my fever abated, and this day I am almost recovered.

To-morrow will be Delia's bridal day, and I will be present at the ceremony. I will still wear my disguise ; but if she recollects me through it, I care not. Be not alarmed at this resolution—it is the most politic I could possibly form. When I behold her in the awful presence of heaven devoting that heart and those vows to another, which have so often and so religiously been consecrated to me—every manly sentiment—a generous pride—the spirit of injured virtue—and let me add, the consciousness of my own superiority — will come to my assistance, and enable me to drive from my breast this unworthy tenderness—which, but too long has enervated my soul, and poisoned every source of earthly enjoyment.

H. BLOOMFIELD.

H 2

LET-

## L E T T E R    L X V I I .

*Henrietta Willmore to Delia Bloomfield.*

Wednesday.

**W**HY is not my lovely friend—my amiable Delia, the study—the pleasure of whose life it is to confer felicity on all around her—why is she not herself happy!—Alas! it is from that generous solicitude, she derives her own anxieties! Can so pure a fountain send forth streams so bitter!

Friendship requires not of its votaries the sacrifice you would make. On a subject so infinitely important, I tremble to advise—to-morrow seals your destiny—yet in the short interval that still remains, I would wish you carefully to examine each secret feeling of your heart—and if the result of such inspection be a conviction, that you cannot love Lord Archer—that your averseness from an union with him, proceeds  
from



from an attachment to another—I would wish you to retract, though at the foot of the altar !

Confess ingenuously to Lord Archer each secret of your soul. His mind nobly superior and amiably candid, will pity and forgive the generous weakness, which impelled you to encourage a passion you could not return. Perhaps he will even thank you for rescuing him from the pain which a delicate and sensible spirit must suffer from an unrequited tenderness, before the most sacred of all unions, renders the connection indissoluble.

But I speak conditionally—if you think you can hereafter love him—but I am aware your feelings are too complicated to be easily arranged—especially in a situation such as yours.

Your heart, you say, is no longer Bloomfield's. My Delia, I fear you deceive yourself. Why does his idea eternally recur to your imagination? Why is your fancy haunted with his form? “Virtue,” you add, “reproves not the tear that bedews

“ the grave of some once dear companion !”  
Oh how ingenious is the human mind—  
how artful in self-delusion—in casuistry  
how subtle !

Virtue shudders at every sentiment which tends to slacken the sacred ties by which you are on the point of being engaged ! Will the tenderness you avowedly cherish for the memory of Bloomfield, contribute to encrease and strengthen your attachment to your husband ? Reflect on the solemn union you are entering into—from the moment you pronounce your vows to Lord Archer—Bloomfield must, if possible, be blotted from your thoughts. If you find his idea stealing into your bosom, instead of retiring to solitude and reflection—fly to company—to amusement—even to the haunts of noise and folly, if they prove more effectual in driving it thence.

I write by my mother’s bedside, who has fallen into a refreshing slumber ; her frame becomes every day more feeble and exhausted. She is sensible of her approaching dissolution, and expects it with the  
cheerful

cheerful resignation of a Christian. I look with envy on her pale emaciated form, the tears I shed are selfish! A celestial repose awaits her departing spirit, whilst I remain exposed to the various distresses of mortality; for though the endearing bonds of society may lighten the load—though fortitude may help us to sustain it—the burden will still lie heavy on the feeling heart!

Wentworth, who to-night will accompany Lord Archer to Bloomfield, is to send an express to me to-morrow. With what perturbation shall I wait the event of your determination! Where the light of human wisdom is insufficient to direct us—we must implore the aid of the Almighty—may his sacred illumination, my dear, my inestimable friend, guide your steps in the way of peace!—Every present blessing—every prospect of future felicity I possess, is the gift of your friendship; and this grateful heart can never know tranquility, whilst it is a stranger to yours.

HENRIETTA WILLMORE.



## L E T T E R    L X V I I I .

*Delia Bloomfield to Henrietta Willmore.*

**M**Y feelings were indeed, “ too complicated to be arranged,”—and your letter, far from contributing to sooth the tumults of my breast—augmented the confusion and perplexity of my ideas!—Oh! never may fatal experience teach my Henrietta to conceive the conflicts of discordant passions it excited in my bosom. I will not recall the idea of feelings, which you have convinced me are alike repugnant to my peace and honour. May they be blotted from my thoughts for ever!

During the interval of Lord Archer's short absence—I had studiously endeavoured to reconcile myself to my fate. We had a conversation before he departed on Tuesday morning, which inspired me with a more fervent admiration—a more tender esteem for him, than I had ever before experienced.



perienced. He observed and resented my coldness, with a manly spirit mingled with tenderness. He explained, but too justly, the motives of my consent, and besought me in terms the most affecting and noble, to permit him to dissolve our engagements, if they interfered with the tranquility of my mind. Could I suffer myself to be thus exceeded in generosity? I did not, indeed, with a despicable hypocrisy, assume the appearance of a passion which I felt not,—but I assured him with all the fervor of sincerity, of my preferable affection, and my resolution of devoting my future hours to his happiness. He appeared enraptured with my professions and left me with regret.

Whilst he was away, I sedulously shunned reflection; I remained not a moment alone or unemployed—and was thus enabled to preserve my cheerfulness, or at least the appearance of it.

On Wednesday evening Lord Archer returned with my father and Wentworth. I received them with smiles of unfeigned satisfaction—Wentworth seemed rejoiced at

my gaiety—I read in his countenance the satisfaction of his worthy heart: he spoke to me, of you—of your mutual affection—of your serene and happy prospects, and my heart caught a ray of the transport that animated his. Lord Archer seemed delighted, even to enthusiasm. My venerable parents, my aunt—my father—Lady Harriot—all viewed me with looks of rapture—the pleasure I diffused around, returned with redoubled transport to my own bosom, and I sensibly experienced that it is not from the mean gratification of its selfish passions, that the human mind derives its most refined enjoyments. I seated myself at the harpsichord and played and sung that tender and elegant little sonnet of Halley's, which in the morning I had amused myself by setting to music

“ Above the lute, the lyre above,

“ Be mine that melting tone,

“ Which makes the peace of all we love,

“ The basis of our own !”

As

As I thought I might possibly be affected by some passages of your letter, I retired to my own apartment to read it. I recollected the contents of the letter to which it was an answer, and as I broke the seal, I trembled—but my sensations when I read it were beyond description.

“Must I then for ever”—said I—“renounce the idea of Bloomfield?—Will my engagements with Lord Archer render even the tribute of a tear shed to the memory of our former affection, criminal!—O virtue! how harsh are thy decrees—how severe are thy injunctions!”

But, Henrietta, my steps were entangled in a labyrinth, from which it was impossible to recede. Could I cruelly disappoint the hopes of my friends, when I had raised them to the highest pitch of pleasing expectation? Could I forfeit my honour—and expose myself to the contempt of Lord Archer—for generous as he is, must he not despise the wretch who could unfeelingly sport with his tranquility, and ca-

preciously blast the hopes of felicity she had allowed him to cherish?

I had flung myself on the ground—and my face, bathed in tears reclined on the sofa. Lady Harriot entered—her cheek grew pale with terror.

“ Oh Delia !” cried she—“ What have you seen —Have you heard any thing of——Why are you thus affected !”

I pointed to the letter.

“ Oh then it is from Henrietta,” said she, instantly recovering her composure—as she glanced her eye over it, her countenance changed.

“ Miss Willmore,” said she, “ might have spared her officious advice, or given it at an earlier period. But if, as she seems to insinuate, an union with my son be incompatible with your peace, whatever the sacrifice may cost him, the delicacy of his affection is equal to it.—Would to heaven you had never seen each other !”

Her tears flowed fast as she spoke. I reproached myself as the involuntary cause  
of



of her distress. I wiped away my own tears, and endeavoured to assume more serenity.

“To me,” said I, tenderly taking her hand, “you have ever been a mother—  
“still continue to act in that endearing  
“character, and view the weakness of  
“your child with the eye of maternal pity.  
“No power shall force me to break my  
“engagements with Lord Archer!”

“To call you my daughter,” she replied, “was the first—the most fervent  
“ambition of my heart! My son and you  
“are dear to me alike, and I fondly flattered myself, from the similar loveliness  
“of your minds and persons, that you  
“were destined to confer felicity on each  
“other. But if I must now——”

We heard Lord Archer on the stairs.

“Lord Archer must not enter,”—said I;  
“he must not see me thus.”

She left me, and I was again at liberty to indulge my reflections. I said, I would not recollect my feelings; but I am insensibly

sibly led to the subject. I again read your letter.

“Am I then,” said I, “on the point  
“of devoting my vows to one man, whilst  
“another possesses my affections! do I  
“involve myself in a guilt by this step?  
“But the Father of Mercies will look  
“down with compassion on a heart, of  
“whose intentions he knows the purity!”

Lady Harriot returned to me. Ever attentive to my peace, she had insinuated to my friends that the letter I had received from you, contained so melancholy an account of your mother's situation—and so pathetic a representation of your own feelings, that she had herself been softened even to tears, and that I had been extremely affected by it. She brought me some drops and water, and I became more tranquil. After I had a little recovered my spirits, I returned with Lady Harriot to the drawing-room. It was almost dark, and none of my friends noticed my absence from them, or made any enquiries. Lord Archer was attentive and tender, but silent and thoughtful.

thoughtful. Whilst we sat at supper, I saw him frequently dart at me the most scrutinizing glances—and suddenly withdraw his eyes, when he perceived I observed him.

After supper, when Wentworth left us, and my grandfather and grandmother retired—I too arose—.

“Must we part so soon, Delia,” said he, looking at his watch, “it is scarcely eleven  
“—and I wish to speak to you.”

My aunt and father were engaged in conversation on the opposite side of the table.

“Come,” said Lady Harriot, “you  
“must not keep her up to-night—you  
“will have time enough to-morrow.”

“Perhaps not—” said he—“perhaps  
“for what I wish to say, this is the time.”

When we stood up to leave the room, he held my hand—and detained me until the rest had quitted it.

“Delia,” said he, with a disturbed and embarrassed air, “do you recollect our  
“conversation on Tuesday morning?”

“I do,

“ I do, my Lord,” replied I, “ but what  
“ is it now referred to?—I hoped I had  
“ then——”

“ Delia,” interrupted he, “ your pen-  
“ sive sadness—the too evident dejection  
“ of your spirits, cannot be occasioned by  
“ Lady Willmore’s illness. But I know  
“ you are incapable of deceiving me,—  
“ unnatural as your coldness appears, and  
“ inconsistent as it is with the warmth of  
“ your feelings—I cannot suppose it to  
“ originate from partiality to another. I  
“ have been informed by Lady Harriot,  
“ that from your childhood, you have ex-  
“ pressed a strong disinclination to mar-  
“ riage, and to this I would willingly im-  
“ pute it. In time, perhaps, this disin-  
“ clination may be conquered by the fer-  
“ vor of my affection, and the excess of my  
“ tenderness. Let us then delay our union  
“ until your father’s return from England.  
“ I would wait patiently for months—nay  
“ for years!—but after we are united, to  
“ doubt your attachment, would drive me

“ to



“ to distraction ! In pity then to me, if not  
“ to yourself——”

He stopped abruptly, and appeared extremely affected. I was exceedingly embarrassed, and knew not what to say. Far from desiring to postpone our marriage, I considered it as inevitable, and ardently wished it over. “ My Lord,” said I, “ that  
“ disinclination is already overcome. I  
“ wish not for any delay—I have already  
“ spoken my sentiments on this subject,  
“ and a repetition of them is unnecessary.  
“ I never conceived a violent passion to be  
“ essential to the happiness of the marriage  
“ state :—if it is, I confess I am deficient—  
“ and can only offer you a rational affection,  
“ a tender esteem, a respect for your  
“ virtues, and an implicit reliance on your  
“ honour. If these,” continued I, “ can  
“ make you happy, accept them with my  
“ hand. Be from this hour, my guardian  
“ and my friend—take me with a generous  
“ confidence to your heart, and banish  
“ for ever those disquieting suspicions,  
“ equally

“equally injurious to my affection, and  
“your own repose.”

“Oh, Delia,” cried he, throwing himself at my knees and clasping his arms round me, “forgive me! I deserve not  
“this generosity. I am unworthy this  
“condescension! Your friendship possesses  
“a charm more attractive—a sweetness  
“more irresistible than the fondest attachment of any other woman! Come then,  
“my loveliest friend, come to my heart,  
“and constitute from this moment the felicity of my existence!”

I was inexpressibly affected by his tenderness. I threw my arms round him, and clasped his head to my bosom.

Would the frigid prude have condemned me! It was a pure impulse of friendship—an effusion of sympathy—which her frozen breast can never feel—and whilst I pressed Lord Archer to my heart, the distinction of our sexes was totally forgotten.

We heard Lady Harriot, who, I believe, was apprehensive of the consequences

quences of our interview, returning to us, and abruptly separated.

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Thursday morning.

Henrietta, I am calm and tranquil. But to retain my sincerity, I must throw aside my pen! I must not look into what passes in my breast—I pass the day in my apartment—and in the evening, the ceremony is to be performed.

Two o'clock,

Still I am in wonderful spirits—Lord Archer has just left me. He is enchanted with my gaiety. O, how shallow is the discernment that cannot pierce a veil so superficial! They are going to dress me.

Six o'clock.

The victim is prepared—and in another hour the sacrifice will be completed.—Take, Henrietta, the packet I enclose you—It contains the picture of Bloomfield—(as yet, it is no crime to write that name) the locket with his hair—his letters—Oh that I had no other remembrances, less transferable!



transferable ! Receive them as pledges of the sincerity with which I mean to conform my future conduct to your wishes.

The carriage is at the door—they come to take me—oh Henrietta, is this the last line you shall ever receive from your

DELIA BLOOMFIELD.

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## L E T T E R   L X I X .

*Colonel Bloomfield to Julia.*

**J**ULIA, it is over ! I beheld her kneeling at the altar. I heard her plight her apostate vows to my rival ! Scarcely could I refrain from boldly rushing forwards, and asserting my right to the hand she devoted to another !

Pale and trembling—she looked more like a victim than a bride ! Her vows were pronounced in a faint and tremulous voice. As she turned from the altar, her eyes met mine



mine—for an instant she gazed in speechless horror—then suddenly averting her glance, as if to avoid the view of an object so hateful—she turned to Lady Harriot and fainted in her arms.

They carried her into the middle of the church for air. Unconscious of the impropriety of the procedure, I pressed through the crowd, and stood close beside her. I hung over her with unutterable anguish—I forgot she was false—I forgot the vows I had just heard her pronounce—I remembered nothing but my passion!

Pale and lifeless as she lay, her beautiful hair fell in disordered tresses on her bosom—how lovely, even in death! for the animating spirit seemed to be gone for ever!

Revived by the means they used for her recovery—she once more opened her eyes—she faintly threw them round—she fixed them on me, and uttering some incoherent expressions of surprize and horror—she turned from Lord Archer, who supported her, and hid her face in Lady Harriot's bosom.

Perceiving

Perceiving the visible effect my presence produced on her—I flew from her—I left the church, and returned to the inn.

My horses are ready—I only wait the return of Johnson, whom I have sent with a billet to Delia—it contains nothing more than an assurance, that I will never more obtrude myself on her sight.

Wherefore has heaven entwisted with the human frame these tender sympathies, these endearing ties!—ties, which serve only to unite us more closely with misfortune—sympathies, which confer on the possessor, supremacy of wretchedness.

The chain that held me to the world, is broken—and but one link remains—your friendship, Julia, like the faithful star that guides the wanderer through the ocean, points an asylum to my wishes !

HORATIO BLOOMFIELD.

LET-

## L E T T E R    LXX.

*Lady Archer to Henrietta Willmore.*

**M**Y Henrietta! my dearest friend—I snatch one moment to tell you—yet I dread even to write it—I have seen him—he was present at the ceremony—Oh, it was no illusion. I beheld his reproachful glances.

Merciful heaven! Jenny, this instant brings me a letter—the superscription is his hand—shall I open it!

Take it and hide it from my sight for ever!—Oh what fatal mystery! does he still love me—and are the vows I have sealed irrevocable. But no—he despises—he abhors me! I am sick even to fainting—Oh Henrietta, is this my bridal day!

DELIA.

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*The Letter—enclosed in the preceding.*

“ Be satisfied, Madam.—Never more  
 “ shall your view be blasted by an object  
 “ so

“ so hateful as the once beloved, but now  
“ detested Bloomfield.

“ Too blindly partial, and too fondly  
“ credulous—I flattered myself my rash-  
“ ness had deceived me. Allured by this  
“ perfidious hope, I crossed the Atlantic—  
“ I left my native country—and have  
“ reaped from my voyages the melan-  
“ choly conviction, that levity the most  
“ capricious—and deceit the most cruel—  
“ may lurk beneath the specious appear-  
“ ances of innocence, candour and be-  
“ nevolence!

“ That you, Madam, may enjoy as much  
“ felicity as is compatible with the con-  
“ sciousness of perjury and falsehood, is  
“ still the wish of

HORATIO BLOOMFIELD.

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## L E T T E R LXXI.

*Lady Harriot Bloomfield to Lady Wharton.*

**I**T is done! Maria. Lord Archer has  
received the hand of Delia! The dar-  
ling project is accomplished. I have se-  
cured



cured to my son, splendour and independence—and entailed on myself encreasing regrets, and everlasting remorse!

In compliance with an absurd whim of the Dean's, they were married in the parish church. At six in the evening we left the house. Delia and I went in my chariot. When we got near the church, the horses startled at some object, ran restive, and overturned the carriage, which fell on the side against a high bank. The glasses were broken, and Delia, who was undermost, was somewhat hurt and greatly terrified. Lord Archer, who followed in another carriage, flew to our assistance. He proposed our returning home—but to this Delia strenuously objected, and we proceeded to the church, where the rest of the company were already assembled.

After remaining a short time in the vestry, we went into the church; but, oh Maria! how shall I express my horror, when I perceived Bloomfield, disguised indeed, leaning over a pew near the altar.—His cheek bespoke the varying passions of

his breast,—flushed alternately with glowing crimson, and overspread with death-like paleness.

Fortunately Delia perceived him not till the ceremony was performed. As she turned from the altar, he met her view; she swooned in my arms—he flew to her—he leaned over her with looks of indignation and resentment, mingled with tenderness and compassion. He was observed by no one but me. Lord Archer was too much occupied by Delia, to attend to any other object. We carried her into the vestry—she recovered, and I attributed her illness to the hurt she had received, and the terror of our accident. We brought her home, and had her immediately blooded. Oh how nobly did she struggle with her feelings!—Where did this heroic girl acquire a fortitude so admirable? Alas! she has learned it in the school of affliction, and I have been her preceptress! She received Lord Archer's assiduities with gratitude and sweetness, and endeavoured to dispel his uneasiness with the utmost gentleness

tleness and affection. She retired to her apartment, and said she would endeavour to rest for half an hour; but her woman came to us immediately after and informed us she had again fainted. It was with great difficulty we recalled her to life. We sent for a physician—all the evening and night she continued in a high fever.

Lord Archer's affection was inexpressible. It was very late when the physician arrived, he consoled us by the assurance that no immediate danger was to be apprehended. Too anxious to think of rest, we watched all night in her apartment. Archer knelt by her bedside, and bathed her burning hands in his tears. Though wild and wandering, she retained sufficient reflection not to suffer the name of Bloomfield to pass her lips, though to me it was too evident he was ever in her thoughts. Towards morning, she fell into a slumber, from which she awoke more tranquil and composed. My utmost address is requisite to sooth the agitation of Lord Archer's mind, disturbed with doubts, without

knowing what to suspect—distracted with apprehensions without knowing what to dread.

Friday evening.

She is better this evening. The physician has pronounced her disorder to be a nervous fever. Her mind is deeply affected. I wish she would unbosom herself to me—but though in the course of the day we have frequently been alone, she seems determined on an obstinate silence.

I know not if Bloomfield has yet left the country—and I dare not endeavour to satisfy those tormenting doubts, lest my enquiries should excite suspicion.

Saturday.

Bloomfield is gone—and my soul is relieved from half its distressful solicitude. I accidentally acquired this intelligence, which has restored me to new life and spirit. A tenant of Sir Richard's, who keeps an inn in the neighbourhood, came this morning to pay rent. The honest man asked how Lady Archer did, and said  
he



he understood from the information of his wife, who had been present at the ceremony, that she had been sadly frightened by the mad gentleman in church.

“What mad gentleman?” asked Sir Richard.

“All I know about him, please your honour,” replied he, “is, that he put up at my house last Saturday evening, and went up into a chamber, where we used to hear him walking about and talking to himself, as mad folks do;—and one evening, (last Monday, I think it was) he went off with himself and staid all night wandering about the woods and bogs, like a will o’the wisp, as a man may say; and towards morning he came home very bad, and so his *servant* bled him—and though he lay in bed all the next day, he would not let *nobody* near him. And there he lay until Thursday, and then he got up and dressed himself and went out. And my wife told me he was in church, and went up and frightened *Miss*. To be sure it was

“ no wonder—and our young ladies are  
“ always so *frightful* when they are going  
“ to be married !”

“ Is he still at your house ?” said I.

“ No—thank God. As soon as he  
“ came from church that night, a freak  
“ took him in the head, and he ordered  
“ his horses and off with him as fast as he  
“ could scamper ; and right glad was I—  
“ for though I can’t but say, I was gen-  
“ teely paid, I never could say, my life  
“ was my own, while he was in my house.  
“ For you know, how could I tell what  
“ the *Devil* might put it into his head to  
“ do ! He might tempt him to get up in  
“ the night, and burn the house, or cut  
“ our throats, or the like. To be sure,  
“ we did all in our power to *pursarve* our-  
“ selves, in sprinkling the doors with holy  
“ water, and saying our *pater-nosters* and  
“ every thing that way. But by this time  
“ he is out of the kingdom, for I heard  
“ him tell his *sarvant* that they should sail  
“ in the next packet.”

I had

I had gained as much intelligence as was for my purpose—and determined to repeat as much of the inkeeper's harangue as I judged necessary to Delia. To prepossess her with an opinion of his madness—to insinuate that his return to Ireland was the effect of the restlessness incident to a disordered imagination, rather than the consequence of a remaining affection for her, will be the most effectual means of restoring her to serenity and reconciling her to her situation. But his interview with me I shall pass over in silence. To intimate to her mind even the slightest suspicion of my fidelity would be dangerous; for though her native candour, no less than her reliance on my honour, and her confidence in my affection, would at present induce her to reject the idea as injurious and unjust, some future circumstance might recall it to her memory. Slow and subtle are the operations of distrust—unseen and unsuspected, it poisons the source of friendship with a malignity which no vigilance can elude, no industry can counteract.

Sunday.

I have had a conversation with Delia. I spoke to her of Bloomfield, and, after some preparation, repeated to her the intelligence I had learned concerning him. She was extremely affected, but readily credited the account of his insanity. “ No  
“ otherwise, indeed,” said she, “ can I  
“ account for the cruel, the reproachful  
“ lines I received after my return from  
“ church on Thursday evening.”

“ What lines ?” said I, “ did he then  
“ write ?”

“ He did : he accused me of levity and  
“ deceit—of perjury and falsehood. But it  
“ was impossible ! if Bloomfield had re-  
“ tained his reason, he could never have  
“ thus added inhumanity to inconstancy :  
“ and meanly endeavour to exculpate him-  
“ self by dishonourably imputing his own  
“ errors to me !”

Though she was violently agitated and shed floods of tears, she has since been more composed and chearful, and to-day the physician thinks her much better.

What



What a precipice have I shunned! A thousand times when I think with horrors on the dangers I have escaped, I raise my heart to heaven with that gratitude which is natural to the human mind on the reflection of a providential deliverance; but a consciousness of unworthiness represses my devotion—for though the Almighty may suffer the snares of deceit to take their designed effect—he can never protect them by his providence.

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Monday morning.

We have received intelligence from Dublin, that Lady Willmore expired last night. This event gives me great pleasure, as Henrietta will now no longer be separated from her friend, and I am assured her presence will greatly conduce to the restoration of Delia's serenity and health.

Mrs. Bloomfield and Dean Sedley are preparing to go to Dublin, and immediately after the funeral (for Henrietta refuses to leave the house until the last duties of

I 5

humanity

humanity are paid to the remains of her mother), they are all to return hither, no more to be separated.

Delia recovers fast—the prospect of her amendment has re-animated the spirits of my son. Adieu, dear Maria, congratulate your sister,

HARRIOT BLOOMFIELD.

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## L E T T E R   LXXII.

*Lady Archer to Henrietta Willmore.*

**R**EPINE not, my Henrietta, at an event which restores you to your Delia. I am better—my soul is relieved from part of its oppressive burden—come and free it from the remainder. Teach me my duty—sooth me with your tenderness—reconcile me to myself—flatter me that if the softness of my temper has betrayed

trayed me into error, the lovely weakness of complying tenderness is more amiable in humanity—more adapted to its imperfect nature, than the rigid sternness of unbending fortitude. Oh, my friend, come to my arms; let us mutually console each other, and let us be separated no more!

DELIA.

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L E T T E R    LXXIIH.

*Lord Archer to Lord Revell.*

CONGRATULATE me, Revell, Delia is mine—her hand I mean—as to her heart I shrewdly suspect it to be enclosed in a mountain of ice, like that of a princess of illustrious memory, whose adventures you may find in the records of fairy land. Would to heaven some friendly necromancer would help me to conjure it out again! I would purchase that little gem with millions,

lions, if I possessed them, for millions are inadequate to its value. How did that sentence escape my pen! is it to recover the heart of a wife, I would have recourse to spells and enchantments, or in other words—go to the Devil! Were the fraternity to see this letter, how would the sarcastic smile of contempt curl up each lip—each nose would be tossed up in derision, and an inundation of malignant ridicule would flow from all quarters on my unfortunate worship.

Never had poor devil of a bridegroom so uncomfortable a wedding—such a miserable foretaste of the torments of matrimony! Even in the hour that I received my Delia's hand, the king of terrors seemed determined to contend with me the prize. Frightened by a perverse accident, she took a fever on our nuptial night. What torments have I suffered?

How often have I looked back to my former insensibility with envy and regret! But the storm is now over—she is almost recovered, though her spirits, which have  
been



been greatly affected by her disorder, are still low. Her tenderness for me seems encreased since our union, her countenance brightens into smiles at my approach; it expresses the placid satisfaction of friendship; but in vain I attempt to discover the animated glow of love. How unaccountable is this coldness in a breast so susceptible of the impulses of natural affection—so tender in sympathy, in friendship so fervent.

The death of her mother has restored Henrietta to our society. Wentworth and she were some time since privately married, —at her desire they are to reside with the Dean, who loves them with an affection truly paternal.

Delia and I are to continue at Bloomfield the remainder of the summer. We amuse ourselves with meditating parties of pleasure, but postpone them until your arrival:—and why do you defer it? Awake, my friend, from this degrading dream of unsubstantial enjoyment. Come and add another to our amiable circle; your soul  
will

will recognize their kindred virtues ; your trespasses have been venial ; your levity is superficial ; your principles are perpetually at variance with your practice—come and learn to reconcile them. No longer suffer yourself to be enslaved by a fascination you despise. No longer be seduced by the shining qualities of men whose highest ambition is the subversion of order—who fix on virtue the stigma which ought to brand the front of vice—and throw the false colourings of wit and vivacity over the deformities of licentiousness and folly. — Leave them, my Revell, to the contempt they deserve ; the satisfaction, which a soul like yours vainly pursues in such society, will be found in the friendship of those whose sense and virtue instruct them to admire and esteem the similar excellencies of a noble mind.—My Delia warmly joins my entreaties : She is already strongly prepossessed in your favour ; she loves you for that fervor of manly tenderness which could so readily induce you to renounce the allurements of pleasure, and fly to the consolation  
of

of an unfortunate friend. Come then, my dear and generous Revell, you would have divided my anxieties; come and participate in my happiness!

ARCHER.

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L E T T E R   LXXIV.

*Lord Revell to Lord Archer.*

Adieu, ye jovial youths, who join  
To plunge old care in floods of wine;  
And as your dazzled eye balls roll,  
Discern him struggling in the bowl.

**I** COME—the convert of your sage advice—I renounce the pomps and vanities of this most vain and pompous of all cities. The arrangements for my journey are already made—already in idea, I explore the sequestered nook of which you are so deeply enamoured; determined in all things to yield me to your sovereign will and pleasure, even though they should destine me  
to

to that most cruel of all mortifications—viz.—to take unto me an help-mate—on condition that she be a fine girl with a fortune of thirty thousand pounds—or if I must make an abatement, let it be in the lady—for the money is indispensibly necessary. Some jointured widow or rich old maiden.—your Delia's aunt for instance—and though such a coalition might be in some degree prejudicial to your interest, the sublime passion which animates your breast will effectually secure it from the sordid avarice, the ignoble ambition of monopolizing the wealth of a family so opulent—of preventing it from circulating for the advantage of your friend: and if your machinations do not impede my success, I may without vanity suppose, I shall meet no obstacle from the lady, who will undoubtedly be highly flattered by a happiness, she had so little reason to expect, as the address of so gay and accomplished a young fellow as my Lordship.

And I am not as unconscionable as you, for were I once in possession of her fortune,  
her



her heart is a trifle I should not contend about ; she might, if she pleased, insconce it in ice, or deposit it in the gulph of Mexico ; and so far from invoking the assistance of fiends and genii, I would not even send down a diver to fish up the precious pearl.

I am impatient to behold the Circe whose magic arts have transformed my friend into that tame domestic animal, a husband. How will you sustain the mortifying consciousness of your own insignificance when we meet ?

But I forget—this is not the style of a profelyte. At first I fear you will find me a crooked disciple—I shall be unto you a stumbling block of offence ; but, as I possess an admirable docility of temper, I shall shortly learn to conform my conduct to your inclinations, and like a piece of clock-work, be actuated entirely by the ponderous pendulum of your understanding.

You must not, however, wholly arrogate to yourself the merit of my reformation.

The

The unhappy catastrophe of our poor friend Montague, has contributed much more than all your sagacious admonitions, to render my present course of life disgusting. Equally possessed of the talents which ennoble, and the qualities which endear—brave—generous, unsuspecting—his understanding good—his person engaging, his manners extremely insinuating, he seemed formed by nature for the ornament of that society, of which an unhappy misapplication of his talents, and a libertine indulgence of his passions, have rendered him the disgrace. You remember his violent attachment to the young and beautiful Louisa de Villencey, whose father placed her in a convent, on an accidental discovery of their mutual affection.

To dissipate the gloom of disappointment, Montague visited Italy, and Louisa was set at liberty. Immediately after her release from her confinement, the old Baron de Montigne, became the slave of her charms, and sent proposals to her father which were too flattering to be rejected.

ted. Louisa with tears and entreaties, opposed this union ; but her austere and unfeeling parents reduced her to the dreadful alternative of marrying the Baron, or immediately taking the veil. A perpetual imprisonment in the gloomy recesses of a cloister, was a misfortune which not even her vows of fidelity to our friend could enable her to support ; her constancy was inadequate to a trial so severe—she gave a reluctant consent, and became la Barone de Montigne. Our unhappy friend soon afterwards returned to France, and in the course of a dissipated life, they had too frequent opportunities of meeting each other, and renewing a passion which had never been extinguished. In these fatal interviews, Montague had the address to persuade the young and inexperienced Louisa, that her engagements to him were prior to those with the Baron, that vows extorted by the authority of a merciless father were invalid, and that the mutual concurrence of consenting hearts could only render them sacred in the sight of heaven. By these  
and

and the like fallacious arguments, he so far imposed on her fond credulity, as to induce her to consent to elope from her husband, and accompany him to Italy.

Though that false shame, so destructive in its consequences, has frequently influenced me to repress my sentiments, when they opposed the prevailing maxims of the fashionable world, the seduction of innocence, and the profanation of the marriage vow, have ever been viewed by me with horror and detestation. I strove to dissuade Montague from an action so atrocious, and exhausted all my eloquence in endeavouring to demonstrate the villainy of his purpose, and the dreadful effects which it must unavoidably produce. How would you have been astonished to see your gay friend assume the character of a preacher, and deal out long sententious lessons on morality and virtue.

But my sermons, like those of the generality of my profession, were entirely ineffectual; Montague refused to listen to any dictates, but those of his own unbridled passions;



passions; he pursued his determination, and fell a victim to the vengeance of an injured husband.

The day after their flight, as I was walking alone in the fauxbourg de St. Germain—I saw a litter slowly approach me. I was instantly seized with a dismal foreboding, and flew towards it to satisfy my doubts; but they were soon confirmed to a dreadful certainty, when I beheld it attended by the favourite servant of my friend, from whom I learned that the carriage breaking on the road, had enabled the Baron to overtake the fugitives thirty miles from Paris—that a duel was the consequence of this rencounter, in which the Baron had mortally wounded his antagonist—that he had secured the lady in a neighbouring convent, and had taken the road to Flanders; he added, that his master desired to be immediately conveyed to Paris.

I accompanied Montague to his hotel, and instantly assembled a consultation of the most eminent surgeons. But they gave me no hopes of his recovery; a ball was lodged

lodged near his heart, and they could not extract it without putting him to the most exquisite torture, which, as he knew his fate must be inevitable, he entreated they would forbear to do. Though his fever was high, he perfectly retained his reason; but I shudder to reflect on the agonies of his mind!—Never, till that hour, was I thoroughly sensible of the ruinous effects of criminal indulgence.

I sent for the worthy Doctor Nesbitt—who was formerly your tutor, and at present attends young Mr. Harley, in the same capacity; but Montague refused to see him.

“ Let him not approach me,” cried he;  
“ to what purpose should I listen to him!  
“ Can he teach me to recall the past!—  
“ Can he instruct me to restore to the serenity of unpolluted innocence, the deluded victim of my licentious passions!  
“ Have I not stained the bosom most dear  
“ to me with the horrors of guilt—darkened it for ever with the gloom of despair! To pray for mercy would add the

“ fin

“ sin of presumption to the black cata-  
“ logue of my vices!—Oh! if you would  
“ suspend the tortures of my soul, sooth it  
“ with the hope of annihilation—persuade  
“ me that this animating principle shall be  
“ extinguished in the dust—that no righ-  
“ teous power shall sit in judgment on my  
“ guilty actions—that vice and virtue are  
“ unsubstantial shadows—eternal misery  
“ the bug-bear of superstition, and a glo-  
“ rious immortality the bright phantom  
“ of enthusiasm! Bring me those volumes  
“ —the offspring of infidelity—the pro-  
“ duction of those subtle spirits who have  
“ so speciously disputed this boasted im-  
“ mortality—ah does not the ingenuity of  
“ their reasonings invalidate their asser-  
“ tions—and evidence the point they are  
“ intended to disprove. In vain—in vain  
“ would I delude myself. Oh what would  
“ it avail to lull my terrors into a transient  
“ serenity—the hand of death must shortly  
“ lift the veil that conceals the secrets of  
“ the invisible world—hide me from the  
“ dreadful idea!—Darkness—despair and  
“ horror!”

Such

Such were the ravings of our unhappy friend; and when with difficulty I persuaded him to admit Doctor Nesbitt, the worthy man was affected even to tears at his dreadful situation. He had no need to awaken the horrors of his conscience, with denunciations of the divine wrath against impenitent sinners; the themes on which he chiefly expatiated, were the tenderness and mercy of the Supreme Being, whom he represented as surrounded by his mildest attributes, clemency, benevolence and love.

He called for the sacred writings; a study poor Montague had hitherto been little acquainted with, and read and explained to him such passages as he judged best calculated to dispel the horrors of his mind, and inspire it with hope. Whilst, with the persuasive force of true piety, and the pathetic eloquence of compassion, the venerable old man displayed to the view of my friend, the nature and immortality of the human soul—the spirit of the Christian Religion, and the glorious attributes of the  
Universal



Universal Father; every faculty of my soul was suspended in astonishment, and wrapt in attention. "Is this," said I, "the man who was once the object of my ridicule!"—What a school for libertines. Whilst I contemplated him with reverential admiration, the recollection of my former excesses became hateful to me—I could almost have determined to return to England, go into orders, and turn saint myself.

Montague languished three days, during which period the Doctor constantly attended him; and if the truest repentance can expiate offences of so deep a dye, Montague's are done away.

I sent off his body to be interred in England, and retired to my own hotel with directions to my servants, to deny me to every one but the worthy Doctor, who had promised to visit me; intent, no doubt, on the conversion of another sinner. Deeply affected by the tragical catastrophe of my friend, and severely afflicted by his loss, the native gaiety of my disposition entirely

forsook me; dissatisfied with myself and disgusted with the world, I became enamoured of solitude, and abandoned myself to melancholy. The companions of my former follies and excesses, now appeared to my imagination in the most odious colours—I beheld them as the destroyers of the unhappy Montague, who had imbibed their pernicious principles, and been perverted by their dissolute example. I determined hence-forward to avoid them as beasts of prey, and never more to mingle in society so dangerous. To confirm me in those pious resolutions, I had—can you believe it, Archer—I had recourse to a Bible, which my godly grandame had bestowed on me at our separation, together with a deal of good advice, and wholesome exhortation, which were soon forgotten, or only recollected with contempt, or repeated to excite laughter, when more poignant subjects of ridicule were exhausted. As I rescued it from the obscurity in which for years it had lain involved in the bottom of a travelling trunk, I compared myself  
to

to Luther, when he snatched the sacred writings from the shades of oblivion. Like him, I carefully examined their contents, and my soul, like his, was impressed with conviction.

On the third evening of my seclusion, as I was thus occupied, I was alarmed by a loud knocking at the gate. I conjectured it was some of the fraternity or their emissaries, and dispatched Pierce to deny them admittance. In vain he protested I was in the country, they insisted on ocular demonstration, and rushed in a tumultuous manner towards my apartment.

The appearance I exhibited, was undoubtedly deplorable. I was dressed in robe-de-chambre of dark silk—a tremendous white night-cap stood erected on my head—and my “unrazored lips,” were adorned with abundant mustachoes: I was seated in an elbow chair, and before me stood a table, on which one solitary light was burning. But my Bible was the chief source of my anxiety. On one hand I dreaded the ridicule to which it would

subject me. On the other, I despised the irresolution which prompted me to desert the cause I had espoused, and suffer the apprehension of censures so contemptible to triumph over my newly acquired reverence for religion. The conflict was for some moments doubtful—but a little of the old leaven remained—I threw my Bible behind me in the chair, in the instant that the Marquis burst open the door, followed by the Count—the Chevalier, Digby, La Varere, Harcourt and the rest.

“Jesu Maria!” exclaimed the Marquis, starting back and crossing himself—“what have we here! Is our friend turned Carthusian! That sanctimonious countenance—that mortified air—what do they denote? Why, if that huge cap of thine were but painted with a few inverted flames, thou wouldest exactly represent a converted Jew ready to be sacrificed at an Auto de fe!”

“You have not yet heard,” said I, without appearing to attend to his exclamations, “of the unfortunate fate of our poor brother Montague?”

“Yes,”



“ Yes,” replied Digby, “ we know all  
“ the circumstances—but what then!—his  
“ end reflects no disgrace on our commu-  
“ nity—why man, thou lookest as if he had  
“ been hanged for petty larceny!—He  
“ died as a gentleman ought to die, in de-  
“ fence of his mistress, and his honour.”

I groaned internally at the mention of that prostituted word.

“ Poor Montague,” said the Chevalier,  
“ he was a chosen spirit!—I could almost  
“ determine to embalm his body, and give  
“ it a place in my banqueting house, as  
“ was customary amongst the antient Egyp-  
“ tians.”

“ That would be defrauding the worms  
“ of their natural right,” cried Harcourt,  
“ and we should give even the Devil his  
“ due.”

“ If so,” replied the Chevalier, “ ’tis  
“ a crying breach of equity to detain you  
“ so long from the custody of your fright-  
“ ful owner.”

“ You mistake the matter,” said Digby  
with a malicious grin, “ the Devil al-

“ ready possesses him. He is nothing more  
“ than a machine actuated by the impulses  
“ of the infernal task-master, to whom he  
“ has devoted himself. The contract be-  
“ tween them exists to eternity—it is sealed  
“ with *blood* !”

The antient contentions of those turbulent spirits have been enflamed to an irreconcilable enmity by Harcourt's having accidentally shot the brother of Digby, in one of their drunken frolicks. To this incident the latter alluded.

Harcourt, by nature furious and impetuous, caught fire at the imputation, and clapped his hand on his sword.

“ Why,” said Digby, with the same malignant sneer, “ why do you not prefer  
“ a pistol?—Is it that your passion for  
“ novelty is so predominant that you  
“ wish even to vary your instruments of  
“ murder.”

“ Murder!” repeated Harcourt, furiously unsheathing his sword. Digby drew his to defend himself.

“ O these

“ O these imperious islanders,” cried the Marquis, interposing. “ For shame —for shame—put up your weapons. Let us never contend about trifles. We are all equally adepts in the science of iniquity—and the future lot of each will be common to the rest. Whether ordained hereafter to enjoy the sensual gratifications of the Mahometan Paradise, or suffer the transformation of the Pythagorean system—whether our spirits, like their material frames, shall be dissolved and blended with their original chaos, or that our disembodied souls shall be doomed to the torments of a local hell; whether we swim in seas of pleasure, or degenerate into brutes; whether we sink into oblivion, or burn in lakes of sulphur; whatever may be our future portion, we shall share in it alike.”

“ Come, then, my friends, since all beyond the grave is wrapt in shadows and in darkness, let us enjoy the little interval of life that is allotted us, and drown

“ in the sparkling bowl our sorrows, our  
“ regrets and our animosities !”

“ Ye are going to celebrate your mid-  
“ night orgies,” said I, “ but you must  
“ dispense with my attendance, as I cannot  
“ leave home to-night.”

“ No matter,” cried the Count, “ bring  
“ wine, Pierce—this cell shall be our  
“ temple—this table shall be our altar, and  
“ we will offer a copious libation of Bur-  
“ gundy to the rosy God of festivity.”

“ You shall have no wine,” cried I,  
provoked at their impudent insensibility.

“ No wine,” exclaimed the Chevalier,  
“ Thou mayest have turned Musselman  
“ and abjured the juice of the vine ; but I  
“ am a good Catholic, and determined to  
“ drink the health of his most Christian  
“ Majesty, and his Holiness the Pope, to-  
“ night ; so good Monsieur Pierce, if  
“ thou wishest to prevent the fracture of  
“ thy own skull, and the demolition of the  
“ cellar doors—bring wine immediately.”

“ This insolent freedom,” said I, “ is  
“ not to be endured ! ’Tis hard, methinks,  
“ if



“ if not even the shelter of my own roof  
“ can protect me from your insults. I  
“ hoped the unhappy fate of poor Monta-  
“ gue would have awakened you to a sense  
“ of the dissoluteness of your lives, and—”

“ Preaching, by Jupiter,” interrupted  
the Count, “ but tell us, Revell, into what  
“ religious society hast thou entered?—  
“ Where are the insignia of the order?—  
“ the skull—the rosary—the hair shirt and  
“ the knotted cords?”

“ Oh,” said Digby, “ I’ll engage he  
“ had his apparatus in *statu quo*, but con-  
“ cealed them on our approach !”

“ Though the spirit may be willing,”  
said Harcourt, “ the flesh will be weak.  
“ Suppose, then, we spare poor Revell  
“ the disagreeable office of scourging him-  
“ self, and each of us bestow on him an  
“ hundred lashes towards rescuing his poor  
“ soul out of the clutches of Satan. I  
“ dare swear they will be full as efficacious  
“ as those inflicted on Sancho Pancho, for  
“ the disenchantment of Dulcinea.”

This ingenious propofal meeting with general approbation, they gathered round me in a tumultuous manner, and notwithstanding all the refiftance I could make, and the abuse and menaces I abundantly beftowed on them, rudely hauled me into the midft of the floor. Unfortunately my Bible, which I had hid in the feat of the chair, now made its appearance, and opened a new field of ridicule to my reprobate companions.

When they had exhausted this topic, the Marquis told me, they were going to fup with Signora Faufтина, the Italian finger, and defired me to accompany them. I endeavoured to excufe myfelf on account of my difhabille; but this apology was of no avail. They infifted on my drefling, and called to Pierce for my clothes—and the Chevalier obferving the plenteous harveft on my chin, declared he would himfelf perform the office of my barber. In vain I endeavoured to decline this obliging offer. They reminded me that the Gofpel enjoined me to “ anoint my head and wafh  
“ my

"my face."—I swore and threatened—but Digby encouraged the Chevalier to persevere in his meritorious design, by assuring him, that notwithstanding my present petulance, he had nothing to apprehend from my future resentment. "Forgiveness of injuries," continued he, "constitutes the very essence of the Christian Religion, and Revell is too true a disciple not to conform to its dictates in a point so material. Make the experiment—smite him on one cheek, and he will turn unto thee the other also!"

You will be astonished at my patient submission to this injurious treatment; but I had to deal with men who were neither to be convinced by reason, nor terrified by threats. Alone, I was unable to resist them; and had I called my domestics to my assistance, the effects of their licentious wantonness might have been fatal. They were heated with wine, and an effusion of blood might have been the consequence.

These cogent reasons determined me to submit meekly to the operation which the

Chevalier performed in a manner so unskilful, that I trembled lest I should get my face scarified, or my throat cut, thro' his aukwardness at his new profession.

Such was my situation, when I was surprized and rejoiced by the entrance of Doctor Nesbitt. Nothing more effectually evidences the native power and loveliness of virtue, than the involuntary veneration she exacts, even from her adversaries. I cannot describe the effect which the presence of this good man produced on our Bacchanalian crew. The wretches, who the instant before, had made the Gospel the subject of their profligate satire, were awed into silence and decency, by the appearance of its Minister: but as the restraint he imposed on them was by no means agreeable, one recollected an engagement—another pretended business of importance, a third was seized with a sudden illness—in fine, they all dropped off, and my barber, literally speaking, left me in the luds!

REVELL.

LET.



## L E T T E R    LXXV.

*Lady Archer to Mrs. Wentworth.*

OUR expected guest, the favorite friend of Lord Archer, arrived last night, my dear Henrietta. Lord Revell, who, to give you his description in a line from Pope,

“ Is just not ugly, and is just not mad,”

is one of the most agreeable men I ever conversed with. “ Behold,” said Archer, as he presented me to him, “ behold the  
“ Circe whose powerful spells have trans-  
“ formed your friend into that *tame dome-*  
“ *stic animal—a husband!* beware, lest she  
“ metamorphose you into a lover.”

“ Your caution comes too late,” said Revell, “ I am already enchanted.”

“ How,” replied Lord Archer, laughing, “ have you already conceived a pas-  
“ sion? Or has the portrait of my Delia,  
“ like those of the heroines of yore, been  
“ sent

“ sent to kindle the flames of love in distant kingdoms ?”

“ The portrait of which I became enamoured,” replied Revell, “ was drawn by yourself ; and is not that passion the most exalted and permanent, which has been inspired by the picture of a beautiful mind ?”

Perhaps, after this instance of his gallantry, you will not be surprized at my approbation of my husband’s friend. Which of us, my dear Henrietta, is superior to flattery ? Some will swallow a larger dose than others—but she that is utterly insensible to its charms, is more or less than woman. You must all dine with us to-day. We are impatient to introduce you to our agreeable guest, and will not be denied. He too, expresses an ardent desire to see you, and is already perfectly acquainted with all your characters. His presence will be a great relief to me, by dividing Lord Archer’s attention, which, since our union, I have almost entirely engrossed. Indeed, my late illness was a most fortunate

fortunate circumstance, as it naturally enough accounts for the languor of mind, and depression of spirits; which, notwithstanding my efforts, are often too visible. But no more of this subject. It is now become the study of my life, to forget my own feelings. Every day attaches me more strongly to my husband. I every day receive new proofs of the most delicate tenderness. I am not ungrateful or unfeeling—surely I must at length be happy.

We have been meditating a tour to Killybegs. You and Wentworth must be of our party; and that Revell may not be necessitated to wander through that Eden, like a solitary Adam, Maria Myrven shall accompany us. I wish Revell may like Maria—she is a sweet girl, and I should like extremely to fix him amongst us.

Archer and his friend have been ranging over the demesne—they are this instant returned—Adieu—Archer must not see what I have written.

DELIA.

For

For near the space of a year, the correspondence was discontinued, during which interval the union of Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth, was blessed with a son, and that of Lord and Lady Archer with a daughter.

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## LETTER LXXVI.

*Julia Bloomfield to Lady Melville.*

Clanguinna, June 1783.

**Y**OU chide me for my silence—but secluded as I am in the cell of a hermit, what recompense can you expect for those gay and agreeable epistles, with which you have favoured me. It is true, I might give you a very poetical description of this sweet retreat of our leisure hours—this humble mansion, which “oaks embosom, and “which hills defend,”—but to you who have no passion for the simple charms of unembellished nature, this would be a subject entirely uninteresting. Though I should



should recount our adventures in the romantic vale of Clywd, or recite our perigrinations to the cloud-capt summit of the huge Plymlymon: though I should give you a pompous detail of the vestiges of the Druidical monuments we discovered in the Isle of Anglesey, or regale you with the history of our perilous expedition to the top of the storm-defying Snowdon—though I should do all this—yea, and even more, the only reward of my pains that I should reap, would be the pleasure of making you yawn; an effect this epistle will very naturally produce, without any exertion on my part to render it yet more stupifying.

How greatly do I feel myself indebted to your enquiries for my brother. He is indeed, the dearest part of your Julia, and since our re-union, is, if possible, more amiable and more tenderly beloved than ever;—for the same reason that mothers are generally more partial to their unhealthy children; for nothing so powerfully cements affection as those little cares and attentions, which are the natural effects of sym-  
sympa-

sympathizing tenderness. Indeed, though I cannot flatter myself my efforts have so far succeeded, as to restore to my brother the natural ease and vivacity of his temper, I have at least the satisfaction to perceive they have been greatly conducive to the recovery of his tranquility. He once more enjoys the conversation of his friends, and, in general, is tolerably cheerful.

Captain Wyndham and his amiable sister have enlivened our little retreat, with their society this last month. The poor Captain, you know, is little better than an arrant coxcomb; but his sister is really a very fine girl, handsome and sensible. She admires my brother extremely, and from the particular politeness with which he treats her, I was beginning to hope the admiration was reciprocal. As an event of this nature would give me the greatest satisfaction, without uttering a syllable that could betray my intentions, I contrived to leave them alone together, as much as I possibly could, and as we were mostly a *partie quarre*, by endeavouring to engross to myself the  
attention

attention of the Captain; I generally succeeded pretty well in my design. But my manœuvres produced an effect of which I was little aware; for our noble Captain (whose want of sense Dame Nature has atoned for, by supplying him with a superabundant proportion of vanity), entirely misconceiving the source they proceed from, has taken it into his wise head, that I am become enamoured of the perfections of his own pretty person. It is true, I cannot in justice reproach him with ingratitude, for he is become, on a sudden, the most tender and passionate of my adorers, and absolutely deafens me with the vociferous ardor of his protestations. However, as I wish, on my brother's account, to detain him here as long as possible, I listen to him with a forbearance and patience truly edifying. But I no longer retain any hopes of calling Miss Wyndham my sister. Yesterday we made an excursion to Snowdon; the Captain, as usual, gallanted me, whilst the care of entertaining our fair guest devolved on my brother; he appeared  
pleased

pleased with the office, rode by her side, and chatted to her with unusual vivacity. When the steepness of the ascent no longer permitted us to ride, he prevailed on her to support herself on his arm, and as he was much more active and dexterous than my guide, they reached the summit some time before us. When we got to them, we found Miss Wyndham sitting alone on a rock, and Horatio standing at some distance from her, looking through a telescope.

“For shame!” said I, approaching him, “how can you suffer your attention to be thus engrossed by the inanimate creation, when so lovely a girl as Miss Wyndham, sits unnoticed in your view!”

“I have been descrying the chain of mountains,” replied he, “that runs along the Irish coast; an object to me more interesting than all the fine women in the world. In vain, my dear Julia, we endeavour to divest ourselves of these local prepossessions. The mind finds a gloomy satisfaction in the contemplation  
“ of



“ of those objects which recall past pleasures to the memory, as the ghosts of the departed are said to hover over the scenes from which, in their earthly existence they derived their felicity.”

These are the mountains of which Delia—his mistress—so beloved and so unworthy of his tenderness, was an inhabitant;—judge then what reason I have to entertain a hope of seeing him united to another.

The remainder of the day he continued silent and pensive.

Miss Wyndham and her brother are going to spend two months in Ireland, and are very urgent in their entreaties to me, to accompany them—my brother, too presses me with great earnestness to be of their party; he has an engagement in Northumberland, but promises to meet me here on my return, and conduct me to London. I confess I am grown rather tired of my solitude, and have no aversion from their scheme. I have many relations and connections in Ireland, and though I was very young when I visited it, I recollect them with

with affection. My brother insists on my visiting the Bloomfields, if I go—"It was  
" unjust," he said, " that an error in an  
" individual should be attributed to a fa-  
" mily in general. That whatever parti-  
" cular causes he might have to complain  
" of Lady Archer, they could not pos-  
" sibly justify our neglect of the rest of the  
" family, or cancel our obligations to re-  
" lations so unexceptionable in conduct,  
" and respectable in character."

I had nothing to object to this reasoning—and yet I could willingly dispense with the ceremony of visiting my good cousins; though I acknowledge I feel a strong inclination to see this bewitching Delia—this Syren, who has shipwrecked the peace of my brother. I know when we meet, I shall hate her most cordially.

Farewel. If I do not change my mind, your answer will find me on the Hibernian shore.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD

LET

## LETTER LXXVII.

*Lady Archer to Mrs. Wentworth.*

Merrion-square,

**W**HENCE, my dear Henrietta, proceeds the regrets and reluctance with which I ever leave Bloomfield? Every desire of my breast—every wish of my soul is centered in that favourite spot: my heart would voluntarily exclude every foreign idea, and deliver itself without controul or interruption to those endearing sentiments of tenderness, gratitude and love, which find no objects beyond the precincts of our little society. Even when death shall deprive me of my revered friends, the scenes where I first experienced their tenderness, and received their instructions—where I enjoyed their society and soothed their declining years, will be for ever dear and sacred to my soul.—Every room—every field—every tree will recall to my memory some affecting instance of their goodness  
and

and affection ; and my mind will derive one of its sweetest satisfactions from teaching my children to lisp their beloved and venerable names, and by a repetition of the virtues of their honoured ancestors, exciting them to emulate their excellence and worth. Gratitude, my friend, is the only tribute we can offer to departed virtue.

But why indulge these melancholy ideas. Have I not reason to hope it will be long ere the misfortune I anticipate arrives? My friends were never better than at present ; our little journey to town seems to have given a new flow to their spirits.

We have had a visitor since our arrival—one of the persons on earth, I least wished to meet ! This is a tacit confession of my own weakness ; why should Miss Bloomfield be more formidable in my eyes, than any other indifferent person ? But is it not natural that an object which recalls to the mind the idea of past sufferings should be displeasing to the view. Yes, my dear Henrietta, this is the source of the pain which I felt at our interview.

When



When I tell you, Miss Bloomfield extremely resembles her brother, it is superfluous to add, that her person is very amiable. Her manners are polite and sensible; and, to every one but me, affable and engaging. My grandfather and grandmother were excessively pleased with her, and so earnestly pressed to accompany us, when we return to Bloomfield, that she was at length induced to consent, though I fancied with reluctance. Indeed, though I attempted to join in their persuasions, if she has half the penetration she appears to possess, I am convinced she must have perceived that the words of my lips were at variance with the wishes of my heart. I could perceive that Lady Harriot was as greatly chagrined with her visit, as myself—like my dear indulgent Henrietta, she feels for all my weaknesses.

Not a word of my child, or of my husband! You will allow this is a most fashionable epistle; when we get into the world, we should, if possible, forget our domestic incumbrances. Lord Revell is my *cicisbeo*,

and escorts me wherever I go with great assiduity. Archer says, he expects to see us stuck *tête-a-tête*, in the next magazine. Adieu, I believe we shall not remain more than another week in town, and Revell will return with us. I wish we could contrive to leave this Julia behind us.

DELIA.

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## LETTER LXXVIII.

*Julia to Colonel Bloomfield.*

WELL, my dear brother, I have seen this Delia—this heroine of yours, and must confess my want of penetration in respect to those superior attractions, you so partially attributed to her. Lucy Wyndham, has a finer face, and, I think, a more striking person: they were together last night in the Rotunda—and Lucy was more universally admired. As to Lady Archer's  
sense

sense and spirit, I have as yet seen no uncommon instance of either. I believe she may be a good sort of young woman enough; rather plain and domestic, I should imagine. However, I shall have a better opportunity of forming a judgment, as I am to go next week to Bloomfield; Sir Richard and his lady were in town, when I made my visit. They are an admirable couple; if I were a man, I think I should prefer Lady Bloomfield to her grand-daughter.

Our voyage was short and delightfully pleasant. As we entered the Bay of Dublin, the rays of the rising sun illumined one of the most enchanting prospects I ever beheld.

The Volunteers are extremely ornamental to this city. You know scarlet was always my favourite colour—it gives such an animation to every public assembly. I should wish to reside here some months, if I was not afraid of contracting a *brogue*, which would utterly disqualify me for shining in any polite circle in London,



next winter. Adieu—I will write to you from Bloomfield.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD.

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L E T T E R LXXIX.

*Colonel Bloomfield to Julia.*

**W**AS it possible that the unfeeling letter I received, could have been written by the pen of my Julia!—You have seen my Delia—but have you not viewed her through the medium of a thousand little prejudices! You confess your want of penetration to discover her superior attractions; and tell me, Miss Wyndham has a finer face, and a more striking person. If regularity of features were alone sufficient to engage our affections, why not fix them on a picture?—If symmetry of form—why not attach them to a statue?—Miss Wyndham, you add, is  
more



more universally admired. I never liked a woman that was universally admired.—The taste of the generality will ever be vulgar;—every clown—every fool and block-head has feeling enough to gaze on regular features and a brilliant complexion; but it requires taste and refinement to discern and admire those more amiable and delicate graces, those beautiful effusions of the elegant mind, which diffuse a lustre over the earthly veil that envelopes it.

Your letter has displeased—disappointed and mortified me. I wished to account to you for a peculiarity of feeling, which appears unnatural to you: I wished you to see and converse with Lady Archer, and expected to find you as greatly captivated as myself. Julia, divest yourself of this littleness, and examine her without partiality or prejudice; you will soon have an opportunity; you will soon become an inhabitant of that mansion, which I never but once approached without rapture.—Nay, perhaps you are at this instant beneath its roof—perhaps with Delia—you see—you hear

hear her ! Now view her with attention—listen to her with candour, and tell me if she is not still the loveliest of women. Examine her every action with the minutest scrutiny, consider her in every different light ; the daughter, the wife, the friend, the parent, the mistress—is she not equally excellent in all ? Extend your enquiries to the circle of her acquaintances ; listen to the testimony of those who are never bribed by flattery or adulation—the children of penury and wretchedness ;—when did they complain without receiving comfort and consolation ?—when expose their necessities without finding them redressed ?—Julia, “ can a fountain send forth sweet water “ and bitter ?—Could a character thus uniformly excellent and exalted, be debased by falshood and inconstancy ! Had I even been supplanted by a rival, that inconstancy would have appeared more natural ; but could a young, susceptible, enamoured heart voluntarily exchange the rapture of a reciprocal passion, and the society of an object beloved, for the vacuity of indifference,

ference, and the gloom of solitude? Even at the moment she approached the altar—the death-like paleness of her cheek, and the tremulous hesitation of her accents, expressed a repugnance to the vows she was on the point of pronouncing. Oh Julia! if you could pierce the obscurity that involves my destiny—if you could convince me that the inconsistency of her conduct was the consequence of some fatal error, you would render me the happiest of mankind; then, though eternally exiled by duty and honour from her presence, I would erect an altar to her virtues in my heart, and worship her image to the latest hour of my existence!

HORATIO BLOOMFIELD.

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## L E T T E R LXXX.

*Julia Bloomfield to Lady Melville.*

**I** HAVE received a most perplexing letter from my brother, and know not what answer to return him. The tribute



of justice, even our enemies have a right to exact from us. Indeed, every hour I pass with Lady Archer, diminishes my astonishment at the constancy of his attachment: nature seems to have endowed her with some uncommon gift, some peculiar power of attracting the tenderness of all who behold her. The darling of her parents, adored by her husband, beloved even to enthusiasm by her friends, and revered by her dependants; even I, prepossessed as I was, and determined to dislike her, cannot forbear joining in this general infatuation. What is the charm that renders her thus irresistible?—Is it not that uncommon combination of sense and vivacity, with tenderness of sentiment and unassuming gentleness of manners. Then her voice! from the moment I heard her sing, spite of my prejudices, I felt it impossible to hate her. Her husband is a very amiable man, and she has a friend as lovely as herself—Lord Revell, whom I remember having met at one of your parties in London last winter, is at present here; indeed



deed, if I could divest myself of the recollection of my brother's sufferings, I never found a little society more perfectly adapted to my taste.

My brother has almost inspired me with those doubts, which I have so often ridiculed as whimsical and romantic. This morning as I sat at work with Lady Bloomfield, Mrs. Wentworth and Delia, the conversation happening to turn upon the American war, I desiginedly, though with apparent indifference, spoke of my brother and the fatigues and distresses he had undergone in that service. At the mention of his name, Lady Archer's face glowed like crimson, her bosom heaved and her eyes fell to the ground, whilst those of her friend were turned to her with looks of sympathizing tenderness; at the same time Mrs. Wentworth eagerly changed the conversation, and Delia immediately afterwards left the room. After so long a separation, why this emotion at the mention of his name? Perhaps she repents her cruel falsehood to him, and Mrs. Wentworth is the

confidante of her unavailing contrition. I am determined, however, that my good brother shall never hear this little instance of her recollection of their former attachment; he is already but too much in his heroics, and this little circumstance would elevate him to his meridian altitude. Lord Revell is very assiduous in his attentions to me; it is true, my being the only unmarried woman of the set, renders them less remarkable. Lady Archer reproaches me with having deprived her of her *cicisbeo*. They are all indeed, extremely obliging to me, and continually contriving some little party of pleasure for my amusement.

About ten miles from hence, in the midst of desert and uncultivated mountains, lies the glen, where stood the once famous city of Gleandelough, to which, in those times when the inhabitants of this island were no less renowned for learning, than remarkable for sanctity, students from the different countries of Europe, were accustomed to resort; but the only vestiges of this city, which have been able to withstand the  
scythe





The most brilliant imagination cannot image to itself scenes more luxuriantly picturesque than are exhibited in this country; but what constitutes its greatest charm is, that perpetual variety of prospect, which seems to change almost with every step you take. "Hills over hills, and Alps on Alps arise." The gay is incessantly succeeded by the gloomy, and the beautiful by the sublime. Brown barren deserts and stupendous mountains, interspersed with valleys of a delightful fertility—torrents gushing from the rocky precipices of those mountains, and glittering through the oaks that wave in hanging forests on their sides, and crown their lofty summits. If ever I build a castle, if it is not absolutely in the clouds, it shall at least be as near them as possible—on the brow of some majestic mountain; I fear I shall never again be able to endure the fatiguing insipidity of level ground.

About one we arrived at the place of our destination. On entering the valley where the ruins stand, I was extremely struck  
with



with the sublimely magnificent picture it exhibited, On the opposite bank of a broad river stands an arch almost overgrown with ivy; behind this arch lie the ruins of some of the churches, and the burying grounds belonging to them, amongst which arises a very high circular steeple. The sides of the glen which extends from east to west, are defended by swelling hills, and at the end of it, the view is terminated by three stupendous mountains which assume an appearance perfectly conical; those on each side come forwards, whilst that in the middle retires to a greater distance, and in the midst of these mountains, lies a beautiful lake, a mile in length, and half a mile in breadth. We amused ourselves with wandering amongst the ruins of the churches, now chiefly covered with ivy, and examining the tombstones, which, on account of their Irish inscriptions, must be very entertaining to an adept in that language. Near the ruins of the cathedral, are two yews, one of which is eleven, and the other fourteen feet in circumference, which

which are esteemed great natural curiosities, not only for their remarkable size, which must have been the growth of ages, but on account of the trees of quick and holly which grow out of the middle of their trunks, and mantle them with their branches. A gentleman of the adjacent country, is building an elegant gothic cottage in the midst of these ruins, which, when finished, will produce a very pleasing effect.

Whilst we reposed ourselves on the banks of the river, defended from the noon-tide ray, by the shadow of the venerable ivyed arch, we were most agreeably surprized by the appearance of some servants, who arrived with a hamper of wine and cold provisions; in pursuance of orders which Lady Archer had given, before we left home, and in truth the good Aunt Sophy, whose principal delight is to administer the good things of this life to her necessitous brethren and sisters, had supplied us with an unsparing hand. A cloth was spread on the turf; we seated ourselves around it, and

and a most dreadful havock of hams, chickens, &c. ensued. The water which flowed beside us, mingled with wine, sugar and lemons, afforded an exquisite and refreshing beverage. This unexpected good cheer exhilarated our spirits; it banished the solemn ideas which the surrounding scenes were so strikingly adapted to excite; we forgot we were environed by the gloomy monuments of monkish superstition, and the awful repositories of the dead; never were six such careless contented mortals assembled together—we eat, we drank, we laughed, we sung with the joyous festivity of the fairies, who, if report says true, celebrate their convivial vigils in this visionary vale, and brighten its mouldering ruins, with a supernatural illumination. Reflecting, however, that the sun would not retard his course in compliance with our wishes, we arose to continue our observations, in which we were assisted by an old peasant, who occupies a little cottage in one corner of the valley, and who, with all that civility and hospitality, so remarkable



able in the lower classes of the Irish, seemed to think it his incumbent duty, as an inhabitant of the place, to point out to us strangers, every circumstance, which he deemed worthy of our curiosity. And first he led us, with an air and look of no small importance, to a tombstone on which he made us observe, the figure of a horse's hoof deeply engraven in the solid stone. On enquiring into the cause of this phenomenon, our guide, who was deeply versed in "legendary lore," informed us with great gravity, that this was the tomb of a notorious horse stealer, who hearing a steed walking over his grave one day (some centuries, perhaps, after his interment) and still retaining his former villainous propensities, hastily stretched out his hand to catch hold of the hoof, the figure of which remains miraculously impressed on the stone. You may judge of the credulity of the people, who can swallow such a tale as this. He further informed us, that the workmen who had been employed in building these churches and the ancient city, which had  
once



once flourished in this desolated wild, had been engaged by their severe task-masters, to work from the rising of the lark, to the lying down of the lamb; but that finding their labours intolerably grievous and fatiguing, they had unfolded their calamities to St. Kevin, who, moved to compassion by their distresses, fervently prayed the Almighty that the song of the lark might never more be heard in this glen. Heaven could not resist the petition of so devout a personage; it was granted in its fullest extent, and since that hour, if we may credit the positive affirmation of our informer, the sweet harbinger of morn has never presumed to build her nest, or warble her wild notes in this interdicted vale. Our friendly peasant said, he hoped we meant to visit the saint's bed, and offered to conduct us to it. On demanding an explanation, he informed me, that St. Kevin's bed, as it is called, is a cave hewn out of the solid rock in the side of the mountain Lugduff, that which stands on the south side of the lake. A recess to which the holy man was necessitated  
to

to retire at the close of each day, to avoid the allurements and solicitations of a certain damsel, who, deeply smitten with the beauties of holiness, had become passionately enamoured of his saintship. But he was little versed in a passion whose nature it is to be irritated by opposition, and inflamed by difficulty. The tremendous rocks and frightful precipices—those bulwarks with which the hand of nature had fortified his retreat, were obstacles easily subdued by the all-conquering force of love, who doubtless conveyed his fair votarefs on his wings to the aerial citadel of the saint. Certain it is, that one night as the holy man lay entranced in extatic meditation, and vainly imagined himself secure from all the temptations of the flesh and the Devil, to his inexpressible amazement and confusion, he beheld this enamoured and adventurous dame creeping into the mouth of his den. Exasperated by this intrusion, and animated by a violent transport of indignation, he suddenly pushed her from him; down she fell into the lake beneath. Instantly, however,

ever, repenting his rashness, he offered up one of his wonder-working prayers for her preservation, and the returning light presented the lovely object of his pious vows, risen, like another Venus from the flood, and very tranquilly seated on the opposite bank of the lake, adjusting her disordered attire, and arranging her dishevelled tresses, which, like those of Aurora, glittered with pearly drops.

Since this period, this consecrated cell retains a marvellous power of preserving all the females who have courage and faith enough to make the pilgrimage, from the perils of child-birth. Thousands have tried the experiment, and its efficacy still remains unquestioned. Lady Archer said, she had once been induced by curiosity to explore this wonderful recess, to which the access was extremely dangerous and terrifying. By no means deterred by these accounts, Lord Archer, Mr. Wentworth and Lord Revell, determined to make the pilgrimage, and I declared my resolution of accompanying them, a resolution in which

I was



I was strenuously upheld by our old guide, who assured us, he was acquainted with a path by which he could lead me to it without danger or difficulty. As the lake was a mile distant, we ordered our horses, and our intelligent guide, who might be styled a chronicle of legendary knowledge, marched beside us, and harangued us by the way with that copious volubility in which the native Irish are rarely deficient.

On arriving at the strand of the lake, we stopped to contemplate in silence, the august and beautiful scenes that surrounded us. Imagine a piece of water of the extent I have already described, almost surrounded with mountains which seem to raise their presumptuous summits to the clouds—and in some places, consisting of rocks piled on rocks, hanging over the lake with a terrifying solemnity; in others, the springs gushing from the rocks, falling from cliff to cliff and glittering like sheets of liquid silver on the sides of the mountains—the stumps of aged oaks hanging from the clefts of the rocks—and the herds of goats, the  
only



only inhabitants of these deserts, advancing to the steep edges of their cragged precipices to gaze down on the strangers with an air of wild curiosity. It is impossible to conceive a scene more strikingly picturesque, or more beautifully romantic.

But our guide, to whom the prospects which enchanted us, were familiarized by his long residence amongst them, awoke us from our pleasing trance, by reminding us, that it was time to alight. We followed his directions, and he led us up the side of the mountain Lugduff, by a path at first tolerably easy. But our way soon began to grow extremely difficult, and Lady Archer and Mrs. Wentworth, determined to proceed no farther. They pressed me to await with them the return of the gentlemen; but our old man, who was doubtless influenced by the consideration of the great benefits I should in future derive from this perigrination, warmly opposed this motion; and encouraged me to proceed, by seriously assuring me, that should I even fall into the lake, my life was not in the least danger,

as

as no one had ever perished in this holy place. Though I had no very implicit faith in this comfortable assurance, I still proceeded, led by my curiosity; but the difficulty and danger attendant on the gratification of it, encreased with every step we took; we clambered over precipices, which I should have thought inaccessible to any animal without wings. At some times we descended to the borders of the lake, and at others, found ourselves half way up the mountain. Sometimes where the bank was entirely perpendicular, we crept along a little path, holding by the heath and grass, to keep us from falling into the lake; again our passage was impeded by precipices. The gentlemen lifted me from one to the other, with one hand, whilst with the other they clung to the rocks; but the danger of the way soon obliged me to take off my shoes, and, like a true pilgrim, perform my journey barefoot; and in many places where the height of the cliffs prevented them from assisting me with their hands, I was obliged to depend for safety on the  
thong

thong of one of their whips; and thus was the fate of your Julia, as that of many other memorable heroines has been, absolutely dependent on a hempen cord. It might have been literally styled, the thread of my destiny; and had Atropos severed it with her fatal sheers, it would have infallibly saved her sister Fate the trouble of ever spinning another clue for me; for we had no saint in company to pray me out of the gulph into which I should have inevitably been precipitated; and though this lake is said to abound in excellent trout and salmon; I never heard it was much frequented by dolphins or nereids. After surmounting many, almost insuperable obstacles, we arrived at the foot of the rock out of which this wonderful cell is hallowed; but extremely fatigued, and intimidated by the threatening precipice which defended its entrance. I threw myself on the grass, declaring myself unable to proceed any further, and our guide had occasion for all his rhetoric to persuade me to alter my determination. He shewed me  
that



that there were little steps cut in the rock to facilitate the ascension of the pilgrims. I suffered myself to be persuaded, and with the assistance of the thong, I got up to the pinnacle of a cliff which hung over the lake, the old man called to me not to look downwards, lest I should be shocked at the danger of my situation, which was, indeed, sufficiently terrifying. At length, however, this perilous adventure was atchieved. I got into the bed which is about six feet in length, four in breadth, and above three in height, and is said to be three hundred feet from the lake, over which it projects. It greatly resembles an oven, and as it evidently bears the traces of human workmanship, I cannot doubt that it was hollowed by the hand of superstition. What a strange infatuation was this ! To dream that the Supreme Being could be gratified by beholding his rational creatures renouncing that society for whose advantage they were created, to usurp the dominions of beasts and birds of prey,—to inter themselves with foxes and badgers in the caverns  
of



of the earth, or skulk with owls, bats and ravens in the crannies of rocks! Surely of all the unclean spirits, which, since the creation of the world, have possessed the poor demoniacs of the human race, that which is engendered by fanaticism, is the most destructive and unnatural, the most capriciously horrible in its nature, and whimsically diabolical in its effects. I could not, however, be surprized at St. Kevin's partiality for this sweet recess. The prospect was so enchantingly savage, so wildly august—I could have fancied myself in some desert, which had never been trodden by the foot of man, and recollected with astonishment, that I was not more than twenty miles distant from a large and populous city. As we gazed around in silent rapture, our ears were saluted with strains of sweetly solemn melody.—We lost them at intervals, but again they returned, borne by the breezes and reverberated by the surrounding mountains.

“What do I hear,” cried I, in amazement; “is it that the spirits of the lake,

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“or

“ or the genii of this consecrated place,  
“ have assembled to offer up their evening  
“ hymns of holy gratitude and solemn  
“ praise !”

“ If you were an inhabitant of this  
“ island,” replied Mr. Wentworth, with  
great gravity, “ you would find nothing  
“ astonishing in this aerial harmony, which  
“ is undoubtedly the song of the Banshee ;  
“ a female spirit remarkable for her at-  
“ tachment to the descendants of the an-  
“ tient Irish, and her melancholy wailings,  
“ which presage death or misfortune, to  
“ the families she attends. She frequently  
“ appears in the figure of a little old wo-  
“ man, in a red mantle, with long silver  
“ hair which floats in the wind and falls  
“ over her face ; which, as she comes to  
“ announce calamity, is bathed in tears.  
“ We shall probably see her on our return,  
“ sitting among the precipices, or perch-  
“ ing on some cragged pinnacle.”

The serious air with which he uttered  
these words, almost persuaded me he be-  
lieved the tale he told ; but I soon dis-  
covered

covered that the music, which I felt myself so strongly inclined to think supernatural, was the voices of Lady Archer and Mrs. Wentworth, who still continued where we had left them on the side of the mountain, and had amused themselves in our absence with singing hymns; animated with devotion by the solemnity of the surrounding scenes.

The declining sun soon warned us of the necessity of quitting our retreat, and my terrors, which had been silenced by the ardour of curiosity, returned more forcibly than ever. I could scarcely believe, when they shewed me the precipices which lay in our way, that they were the same I had passed over; and now, when repentance could avail me nothing, most sincerely regretted my folly, and heartily censured my rashness, in thus unnecessarily exposing myself to fatigue and danger. But the old man put me almost past patience, by wanting to drag me down another range of rocks, more horrible, if possible, than those I had already passed—to fix me on a little



green stone which projects but six inches beyond the perpendicular bank; and on which the female pilgrim must turn herself three times about—and not a little was our guide displeased at my obstinate and heretical refusal to comply with this indispensibly necessary part of the ceremony.—But enough of rocks, cliffs and precipices—suffice it to say, we arrived at the place where we had left our unseen musicians, without any misadventure, except a few scratches and bruises, which was, perhaps, better fortune than we merited. Exhausted and fatigued, we seated ourselves on the grass. The sun sunk beneath the high pyramidal mountain at the bottom of the lake, which now diffused its lengthened shadow over the water, and a large stone cross that stands on the strand of it; erected doubtless, to enflame the minds of the pilgrims with the holy fervor of devotion. But the departing beams still faintly illuminated the more distant mountains, and the ivy-mantled ruins of the churches. Never did I behold a scene more admirably calculated to

“ Exalt



—————" Exalt the mind,  
" To solemn thought and heavenly musing!"

The soft flowing of the water—the whifpers of the breeze—the gloomy vestiges of superstition which lay scattered over this solitary and deserted vale;—frail monuments of the industry of man, but striking emblems of his transitory existence!—I viewed in this savage solitude the sepulchre of a once flourishing and populous city, and with a sadly prophetic spirit, I looked forwards to that æra, when the places of these proud cities which now elevate their aspiring domes with a vain magnificence, shall be unknown and unfrequented as this desolated glen;—the hiding places of wild beasts, and the habitation of owls!

With reluctance we' bad adieu to this sadly solemn scene; our road, when we quitted it, lay along the side of a lofty mountain. Beneath us lay a valley thro' which the river Ovoka, which flows from the lake, winds in fanciful mazes—on the opposite side arose a range of towering hills covered with dark forests; and the moon

rising in clouded majesty in the east, completed the awful magnificence of the scene.

It was late when we reached Bloomfield, wet and chilled with the dews of night; but we found a blazing turf fire prepared for our reception, and concluded a day which we all acknowledged to be one of the most delightful we had ever passed, with a cheerful and sociable repast.

Lord Archer, Lord Revell and Mr. Wentworth, are to leave us for a few days. I shall not know how to dispose of myself in their absence. Lady Archer and I are still a restraint to each other; but this darling politeness, of which we are half our lives the slaves, will not suffer us to keep asunder as inclination would mutually prompt us! Adieu.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD.

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## LETTER LXXXI.

*Julia Bloomfield to Lady Melville.*

SINCE I wrote to you, my dear friend, I have made a most affecting discovery.  
I think

I think I told you Lord Archer and his friend were to leave us. After their departure we were solitary and pensive. Delia still appeared constrained in my presence; and, though the amiable sweetness of her manners had in a great measure effaced the disadvantageous impressions I had received of her, she so forcibly recalled to my memory the sufferings of my brother, that I felt a constant depression of spirits in her presence, unless when relieved by other society. The lovely Mrs. Wentworth was confined to the house with an old Dean, uncle to her husband, who is ill of the gout. I spent two days in a manner not very agreeable to my inclinations, although Lady Archer appeared most good-naturedly solicitous to entertain me. On the third day, the whole family received an invitation to spend the day with Mrs. Wentworth. That day I happened to wear my brother's picture; Delia sat opposite to me in the carriage on our way to Firdale; and I once perceived her eyes fixed on it with an air so melancholy, that I caught



the infection and sighed deeply; she raised her eyes, and, on perceiving I observed her, her face and bosom were instantly covered with blushes; she even trembled with confusion.

In the evening, Mrs. Wentworth very earnestly pressed me to stay the night with her. I complied, and I fancied that Lady Archer was very well pleased at leaving me with her friend. The Dean retired early, and left us alone. Mrs. Wentworth is uncommonly sensible and pleasing; I shook off all restraint in her society, and almost fancied myself conversing with some intimate friend. We chatted for a time on general subjects; but once, on asking some question, I turned to her for an answer, and perceived her attention so deeply engrossed by the picture I wore, that she seemed not to hear the words I addressed to her, and her countenance, whilst she contemplated it, was almost as melancholy as her friend's had been. Surprized at this dejection—I greatly wished to make my brother the subject of our conversation.

“ Have



"Have you any recollection of this face, Mrs. Wentworth?" said I.

She replied, she had often seen Mr. Bloomfield, and perfectly recollected his features, though it was eight years since their last interview; as she had been on the Continent with her mother for three years, previous to his departure from Ireland.

"I have often heard him speak of you," returned I, "in terms, I thought exaggerated, until I had the happiness of meeting you."

She replied very coldly, "that she ought to think herself indebted to him for his good opinion,"—and asked some frivolous question, which was evidently designed to change the topic.

"I perceive, my dear Mrs. Wentworth," said I, greatly struck with her manner, "that you are strongly prejudiced against my brother; and I esteem you too sincerely to suffer you to retain an ill impression of a person so dear to me, if it is possible to efface it."

“ My dear Miss Bloomfield,” said she, with some warmth, “ if you please we will drop the subject ;—we could not, indeed, have happened on another so disagreeable.”

“ Disagreeable !” repeated I, “ I confess I am greatly at a loss to conceive for what reason my amiable brother should be a subject so disagreeable to Mrs. Wentworth.”

“ Amiable, I acknowledge,” returned she, “ but too amiable ! but can you, who are acquainted with my tender attachment to Lady Archer, be surprized if I behold in no very favourable light, the person who has so cruelly injured her ?”

“ He injure her !” replied I, in astonishment. “ Oh the deceitful Syren !—she has abused as grossly, as she did my unhappy brother !”

“ Hold !” interrupted she, with great emotion. “ I cannot hear a sentence injurious to the honour of my friend :—I accuse you not of malignity in your assertions, but you are the dupe of a deceiver—

“ceiver—a traitor, whose base desertion  
“too long destroyed the peace of the most  
“faithful and honourable bosom under  
“heaven. But of my Delia’s truth and  
“innocence, I have the most indubitable  
“proofs.”—Her tears flowed fast as she  
spoke.

“I knew not what to believe—“Gracious  
“heaven!” I exclaimed, “is it possible  
“they can both have been deceived!”—  
My brother’s suspicions of Lady Harriot  
strongly recurred to my memory. I had  
in my pocket-book the letter I received  
from him, since my arrival at Bloomfield.  
“Read these lines,” said I, giving it to  
Mrs. Wentworth, “is this the language  
“—are these the sentiments of a traitor—  
“a deceiver!”

“Good God!” cried she, on reading it,  
“is it possible that Bloomfield still loves  
“my Delia!”

She sunk back in her chair, and her emotions were so violent, that I dreaded their effects.



“ Oh my Delia! my dear unhappy friend,  
“ how have you been betrayed!—Julia,  
“ we must never suffer this fatal secret to  
“ pass our lips—the tranquility of both de-  
“ pends on their ignorance of each other’s  
“ sentiments.”

“ Is it then possible?” said I.

“ Do you still doubt?” interrupted she.  
She arose, and taking a bundle of letters  
from a cabinet, “ here are the proofs of  
“ her truth and of her sufferings.”

They were, indeed, proofs—incontestible proofs!—I had no longer a remaining doubt. It appeared evident from those letters, that those of my brother, written to Delia from Scotland, had been lost or intercepted, that concluding him inconstant from this circumstance, her health had fallen a sacrifice to her disappointed tenderness. Against her inclinations, she was hurried to France, and detained there till after his embarkation for America. Who could be the deviser of this scene of fraud and treachery?—Who, but that scorpion—that viper, whom she still cherishes



rishtes in her bosom!—Yet I cannot persuade Mrs. Wentworth to believe Lady Harriot guilty—but do not so many strongly concurring circumstances, amount to a certainty?—We were overpowered by sorrow and astonishment. Delia's letters, those especially which were written from France, when her sensible mind laboured more immediately under the pressure of its calamity, were unspeakably affecting; and even these which were written long after, when her soul had learned to submit itself to its afflictions; when the strength of her constitution and the serenity of her mind had been, in some measure, restored to her—retain a cast of melancholy, which mingles itself even in her gayest hours. We read and wept alternately half the night; but Mrs. Wentworth shewed me no letters, which were written subsequent to Lord Archer's arrival in Ireland.—Indeed if, as I cannot forbear suspecting, Delia is still partial to my brother, her acceptance of Lord Archer's hand, appears to me an inexplicable mystery; for inferior as he was  
in

in fortune, it is not reasonable to imagine that in her choice of him, she was influenced by any of her family, except Lady Harriot. However, as I perceived that Mrs. Wentworth declined speaking on this subject, I was obliged to repress my curiosity.

“ I have been imprudent,” said Mrs. Wentworth ; “ but I have been betrayed  
“ into an error by surprize. Had I had  
“ time for recollection, I should never  
“ have undeceived you ; but it is unnecessary to enjoin you to be secret on a  
“ subject which so nearly concerns the  
“ future happiness of your brother ; for  
“ though his romantic passion might for  
“ the present be highly gratified by the  
“ discovery of Delia’s fidelity, what would  
“ it avail in the end, but to root in his  
“ breast an unhappy tenderness, which  
“ time may perhaps overcome.”

“ But may I not at least,” said I, “ have  
“ the satisfaction of vindicating to Delia,  
“ the conduct of my injured brother ?”

“ Not

“Not for the universe!” replied she, with emotion—then after a pause—“those early attachments leave deep traces on the memory, and, though Lord Archer at present possesses her warmest attachment, the conviction of your brother’s constancy, by restoring him to her friendship, must render his peace of conscience to her repose:—but would it mitigate his sufferings, to interrupt the tranquility of a bosom so gentle, with unavailing regrets and fruitless sympathy? No, my dear Julia, whatever source this error, which has occasioned so much unhappiness to both, has proceeded from, it must be our part to conceal it with the utmost vigilance from their knowledge; and, if possible, prevent them from ever meeting more.”

We talked all night. Mrs. Wentworth told me her little history—she expatiated on her obligations to Lady Archer, with tears of gratitude and love. Oh, my friend, of what felicity have we been cheated! How happy



happy should I have been in such a sister—  
my brother how blest in such a wife!

It was day-light before we separated—but the discovery I had made banished repose from my pillow: never before did I so deeply regret my brother's blasted prospects; and Delia, whom I could not forbear admiring, when I believed her light and worthless, now that I was convinced of her innocence and truth, appeared most irresistably lovely.

I met Mrs. Wentworth alone at breakfast: she had passed a night as restless as my own. The traces of our melancholy were visible in both our countenances; Mrs. Wentworth's was pale and dejected; and I looked so like a harridan, that I turned from the glass with horror.

We sent away the servants, and breakfasted alone. We again talked over the subject which had so deeply interested us; it was impossible to recollect it without tears. I looked towards the window and saw Lady Archer in a riding-dress, crossing the lawn—"She will be with us in an instant,"



"stant," cried Henrietta, "what shall we do? How account to her for an alteration, which cannot pass unnoticed?"

I looked round and flying to a book-case, had just time to take a volume of Rousseau's *Eloisa*, and replace myself before she entered.

"Have you been well Henrietta?" said she.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Wentworth; "but Miss Bloomfield and I were so silly as to sit up reading half the night."

"Oh," said Lady Archer, leaning over me, "you have been infected by the *affligentes reveries* of my friend Rousseau, as Voltaire very justly styles them."

"And yet," said Mrs. Wentworth, "he is a bewitching author."

"So your physiognomy bespeaks him, my dear Henrietta; he has almost transformed it to the similitude of a Hecate. If Wentworth were to see you thus, our poor favourite would be exposed to new persecutions: I doubt, if an eternal imprisonment in the dusky corner of some gloomy

“ gloomy garret, would be deemed a sufficient punishment—he would scarcely escape the flames.”

Her presence revived my melancholy regrets—I could not restrain my tears—I turned from her, and held the book before me.

“ Come, my dear cousin,” said she, gently taking it from my hand—“ are you too happy?—one would imagine that the sorrows and calamities of real life, might supply a sufficient fund of affliction; why then this strange propensity to derive it from visionary sources !”

She sighed as she spoke. I was unspeakably affected; I caught her hand, which I tenderly pressed; with what rapture could I have clasped this amiable injured creature to my bosom! Mrs. Wentworth cast at me a reproving glance—I arose abruptly, and quitted the room.

We are no longer a constraint to each other,—on the contrary, we sit or walk together for hours, and the time thus spent glides imperceptibly away. In these interviews,

views, my brother is ever present to my mind; a thousand times in the day his vindication is on my lips. What self-denial do I practise in forbearing to justify him?—Is it not enough that the peace of his mind has been utterly destroyed—must its virtues be eclipsed by this shade of obloquy.

Lady Harriot appears jealous of my growing friendship with Delia—our frequent *tête-a-têtes*, methinks, displease her; nor does she suffer us to remain an instant alone together, when she can possibly avoid it. How hateful are her intrusions!

Lord Archer and his friends are returned—he tells me, Revell was quite impatient to leave Dublin, and hints pretty plainly, that I am the magnet which attracts him.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD.

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## L E T T E R LXXXII.

*From the Same to the Same.*

CAPTAIN WYNDHAM, and his sister are returned from the North.

In



In a fortnight I must bid adieu to a family, in which, were it not for my affection for my brother, I could almost determine to fix my residence. They all express great concern at my purposed departure; but though he says less than the rest, no one appears more really chagrined than Lord Revell.

This morning at breakfast, after we had been speaking of my journey, he said with some confusion, that he too had business in London, and must be there within this month. At this intimation, Lord and Lady Archer, looked at each other with great surprize. "Perhaps," said the latter, with one of her arch smiles, "you  
" may be able to settle your affairs so soon  
" as to be ready to sail with Miss Bloom-  
" field; since our cousin will leave us, I  
" should wish to place her under your pro-  
" tection."

I replied, looking very silly, whilst I spoke, "that such a convoy was entirely  
" unnecessary, as the lady and gentleman  
" with whom I had left England, were to  
" accom-



“ accompany me to London, if my brother did not meet me in Wales.”

Mrs. Wentworth and I have fixed a correspondence;—but this is unknown to Lady Archer. It would appear remarkable in Mrs. Wentworth, to withhold from her friend, the perusal of my letters, and you will easily conceive it would be extremely improper she should see them.

Lord Archer's family seat, situated near Bath, which had been let during his minority, and for some years afterwards, is now out of lease. He and Lady Archer purpose going thither to spend the autumn, and very warmly press me to be their guest. On my brother's account, however, it will be impossible for me to accept an invitation so agreeable; if I can avoid it, he shall not know of Lady Archer's visit to England—indeed I shall be greatly distressed on my return to him; I know I shall undergo a strict examination, and I shall feel myself utterly at a loss to evade his importunate interrogatories.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear friend, I hope we shall meet within a month.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD.

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LETTER LXXXIII.

*Mrs. Wentworth to Miss Bloomfield.*

**C**OULD my dear Julia be conscious of the gloom her departure diffused over our little society, if not her affection, her vanity at least would be highly gratified. Poor Revell! we should have been worse, but for his awkward efforts to appear gay and unconcerned, which were highly entertaining. This morning we put him so out of patience, with our sympathetic condolences, that half angry and half in jest, he ordered his carriage, and made his exit in a great huff. I have no doubt that you will see him before we do. It must be a match, my dear Julia; you are the woman in the world best adapted to his taste; I even trace a strong similitude in your characters. Do, my good, sweet girl, bring

us

us back this Benedict laden with matrimonial fetters : we are all impatient to retaliate and retort the injurious treatment that we poor sneaking pitiful married wretches, as he affects to call us, have received from him.

You cannot conceive the inquietude with which I look forward to the departure of my friends ; and Delia expresses yet greater reluctance to this journey. I hope, however, it will be serviceable to her, for though her anxious solicitude to conceal from her friends every circumstance, which may affect their tranquility, induces her to disguise it—she is far from being well. Her constitution, naturally delicate, has been impaired by incessant struggles with her feelings.

Although the Dean has been ordered the Bath waters, by his physician, and Lord and Lady Archer earnestly press him to accompany them, he positively refuses to go—his motives, indeed, are rather whimsical ; after declining as long as he could, to assign any reason for his obstinacy—" I  
" am



“ am astonished, Delia,” said he, to Lady Archer, “ that you can be thus urgent in  
“ your instances, acquainted as you are  
“ with the violent antipathy which I have  
“ naturally to fools—they are always gre-  
“ garious animals; but can you suppose  
“ me so infatuated, as to trust myself in a  
“ place in which they assemble from all  
“ quarters in congregated herds !”

“ But,” replied Delia, “ as we shall be  
“ there before the fashionable season—”

“ I care not what season you go in—the  
“ recollection of the diabolical torments—  
“ I have already endured in that magnificent  
“ Pandemonium, would render it execra-  
“ ble in any, and lame as I am, I would  
“ run twenty miles without ceasing from  
“ the sound of the Abbey bells.”

If the Dean had been persuaded to go, I believe I should have taken my little boy, and accompanied him as a nurse,—leaving Wentworth to perform the parish duties, and console the old gentry in our absence—I know not how to suffer Delia to go without me.

How



How is your brother? I cannot express half the affection I feel for my old friend and companion. I am now inclined to pay him not only the tribute of esteem and pity, which his merit and his sufferings demand, but also those arrears of friendship, of which he has been so basely defrauded. And yet, my dear Julia, I cannot be persuaded that Lady Harriot is guilty. The proof you bring against her, is at most presumptive; to condemn a person so unexceptionable in her conduct, candour would require it to be positive.

You see I wave the usual formalities, and to convince you of the satisfaction with which I engage in this correspondence, have begun out of course, impatient to assure you how affectionately I am yours

H. WENTWORTH.

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## L E T T E R    LXXXIV.

*Julia Bloomfield to Henrietta Wentworth.*

**Y**OUR letter, my dear Henrietta, was an emblem of yourself—kind, condescending and affectionate. I cannot possibly decide whether the incense it offered,

was most soothing to my vanity, or my affection—they were equally gratified.

My brother met me in Wales, and after remaining two days in his hermitage, we proceeded to London. Lord Revell overtook us on our journey, and we travelled the rest of the way together. Now will you exult in your prognostics; but have patience; whatever partiality Revell might have once felt for me, it is now at an end. And yet it is hard—very hard, as you will acknowledge, when you hear the circumstances.

I have been from my infancy intimately acquainted in the family of Lady Elwood, who is a widow, and a woman of exemplary character. Her eldest daughter, who is married to Sir Charles Melville, is my most particular friend; but her only son, the present Lord Elwood, is one of the most depraved and licentious young men in England. My connection with his family, obliged me to suffer his acquaintance, which, until lately, was no great burden to me, as I never had any reason to flatter myself with being a favourite of his. Early last spring I went to spend some time with

Lady

Lady Melville, at a villa she has near Richmond. She had lately taken under her protection, a very pretty and amiable young girl, the orphan of an officer, who had enjoyed a considerable post in the army; but dying suddenly, had left this young creature, who had been reared with delicacy, and educated with elegance, almost totally unprovided for. A situation so melancholy and defenceless, strongly excited Lady Melville's compassion; she generously offered the afflicted Sophia, an asylum in her house—an offer which was accepted with gratitude.

Lord Elwood was of our party; but I was not long ignorant of the motive which procured us the honour of his company. Sophia, the innocent Sophia—was his allurements—the victim he had destined for his prey! I saw the designs of the destroyer and determined to frustrate them. Sophia's dependent situation, abstracted from every other consideration, would have induced me to treat her with distinction; but I had a stronger motive for endeavouring to conciliate her affection. I was so happy



as to succeed; she received my attentions with gratitude, and in a short time became extremely attached to me. That we might have the more leisure for private conversation, I entreated her to sleep with me; and I seized every opportunity of putting her on her guard, by representing the character of Lord Elwood in its native colours. She heard me at first with horror and concern; for the artful assiduities of the hypocritical wretch, had made some progress in the affections of the poor artless girl. From this time, however, her conduct, in respect to him, was visibly changed. I could plainly perceive his chagrin at this alteration, and saw that he attributed it to its true cause—my interference;—but he suppressed his resentment, and concealed the venom that rankled in his wicked heart, until he found an opportunity of mortifying me effectually.

One morning that I had been out visiting with Lady Melville; on my return, Sophia flew in tears to meet me, and when I enquired the occasion of her disorder, informed me, that Lord Elwood had insulted her

her



her with the basest proposals; she added, in an agony of grief and resentment, that she was determined at all events, to leave a house where she would be perpetually exposed to his presence. I endeavoured to sooth her with professions of tenderness and esteem, and assured her that her acceptance of a shelter beneath my roof would be considered as the greatest obligation she could confer—that I should love and protect her as my sister. The sweet girl received my offer with a transport of gratitude; but as she wished to keep Lady Melville ignorant of the designs of her brother, lest it should occasion a misunderstanding between them, it was agreed on, that I should beg Sophia of her patroness. On our return to town, Lady Melville consented to my wishes with a willingness, which gave me room to imagine she suspected the motives which influenced my request; and I had the happiness to bear off my prize in triumph, spite of the secret machinations of the enemy, who was at great pains to counteract my operations. My brother, who had been in the country during this trans-

action, at his return expressed great pleasure at my conduct; and to place our ward for the future beyond the reach of those temptations, to which youth, innocence and beauty are exposed by poverty and dependence, he settled on her fifteen hundred pounds, which is to be at her own disposal, when of age: When I left London to accompany my brother into Wales, I consigned Sophia to the guardianship of a friend on whose prudence I could rely; and took her again under my protection, on my return to London.

My brother, who on our journey had been greatly pleased with Lord Revell, engaged him to dine with us the day after our arrival; we had a few intimate friends with us, and in the evening we walked to St. James's Park.—Lord Revell was more than usually entertaining; my brother too was uncommonly lively, and indeed my happiness was complete, until turning to look behind me, I saw Lord Elwood at my shoulder, and perceived that he was entirely occupied in examining Revell, who walked at my side.

“ Dear

“ Dear Julia,” exclaimed he, on perceiving I observed him, “ how agreeably  
“ am I surprized at this rencontre ; I know  
“ you are displeased with me,” continued he, observing I received his compliment very coldly ; “ but as I hope for mercy, I  
“ knew not of your arrival. ’Tis true, I  
“ was at Richmond until this morning, but  
“ surely I might without presumption,  
“ have hoped to be informed of your operations : the Colonel has used me extremely ill !”

I was so stunned at this unexpected address, which I perceived threw Lord Revell into great confusion, that I was unable to reply for some moments. I replied after a pause, “ that I was extremely surprized he could think me so very ridiculous, as to be displeased at an omission of attention, I had so little right to expect.”

“ How can you be so ill-natured ! your warmest resentment would be less intolerable than this contemptuous coldness ;  
“ but when I account to you—”

“ Account to *me*, my Lord !”



“ Dear Julia, no more of this disdain, I  
“ beseech you : have I not been already  
“ sufficiently punished by your cruel ab-  
“ sence ! To-morrow morning, if you will  
“ allow me the happiness of half an hour’s  
“ private conversation, I shall exculpate  
“ my conduct from blame, in a moment.”

“ No, nor in an age, my Lord !” cried  
I, enraged at his impertinant particularities,  
which I plainly perceived were intended to  
torment and provoke me. “ Besides, to-  
“ morrow I am engaged.”

“ O thou impracticable ! would’st thou  
“ drive me to despair ! But to-night, at  
“ least, you are disengaged—I will go home  
“ and sup with you.”

“ What, if I do not sup at home !”

“ I care not—wherever you go, I will  
“ accompany you ; so long as I have pined  
“ in absence, shall I so soon relinquish the  
“ charm of your society !”

I looked at Revell, who listened in visible chagrin ; during the remainder of our walk he addressed not a word to me : indeed, Lord Elwood allowed him no opportunity, so industriously did he assail me with his malicious assiduities. It



It was growing dark, and I proposed returning home. Elwood got me a chair, and paraded by the side of it. When we got to Pall-Mall, he accosted his sweet little Sophy, as he familiarly styled her, with unparalleled effrontery, though the air with which she received his compliments, was to the last degree cold and forbidding. At supper, for he required not an invitation, to favour us with his company, he seated himself next me, leaned over the back of my chair, and when I was obliged to sing, applauded my execution with affected enthusiasm. In fine, he so admirably personated the enamoured swain, that not only Revell, but the rest of the company fell into the snare; and even my brother appeared astonished. Never did I feel the exertion of self-command so difficult a task. At one our company departed. Revell retired without speaking, slightly saluting me as he left the room; and Elwood, who was highly delighted with the mutual mortification he occasioned us, before he left us, promised me a visit next morning. We lay late next day,—as I crossed the hall

to the breakfast parlour, I heard a loud rap at the door, and instantly conjecturing that it was Elwood coming to make his promised visit, ordered the footman to deny me. I giddily ran at the same time to the window, and Revell that instant bowed to me with a reproachful air as he passed it. I foamed with vexation, and internally vented my spleen, by execrating the malignity of the wretch that occasioned it. Elwood kept his word, but was denied admittance, and I passed the day in solitude and discontent. My brother, who had dined out, returned in the evening, and observing the dejection of my spirits, tho' ignorant to what cause to impute it, proposed a party to Vauxhall.—I acquiesced in the hope of meeting Revell, to whom I ardently wished to apologise for his exclusion in the morning. I was not disappointed—he was almost the first person I saw as we entered the gardens—but again my evil destiny predominated! in the instant he approached us, we were joined by that abominable Elwood, who solemnly declared he had just left Pall-Mall, where he had been

been informed by the domestics of our *route*, and professed himself enchanted with the good fortune of having so soon distinguished us. Revell's gloom returned, but he immediately resumed his gaiety, and attaching himself to Sophia, chatted to her with his accustomed vivacity. Shall I confess to you my folly, and acknowledge a weakness I cannot recollect without blushing? Piqued by his attention to Sophia, and mortified to see the gloom of jealousy so soon dispelled from his brow, I felt displeased at his insensibility, and determined to punish him by coquetting with Elwood. Anger recalled my vivacity. I treated Elwood with great good-humour, received his assiduities with extreme complacency, and for half an hour flirted most unconscionably. This artifice lost not its effect—Revell's ill-humour returned;—he complained of a violent head-ach, and bidding us good night, abruptly quitted us. Tho' my vanity was flattered by this triumph, my spirits forsook me the moment he left us: I grew thoughtful and inattentive. Elwood, too penetrating not to perceive



this alteration, and too spiteful to suffer it to pass unnoticed, looking after Revell, suddenly exclaimed, "stop thief! stop thief!"

"What do you mean?" cried I, in astonishment, "are you frantic?"

"No, no," replied he, "but can I do less than raise a hue-and-cry after the varlet, who has burglariously entered the recesses of your breast, and feloniously stolen thereout a jewel in the form of a heart, which at this instant he bears off in triumph, spite of my efforts to detain it."

This reply threw me into a confusion, which effectually silenced me. The monster perceived and enjoyed my distress.

"O," cried he, "here comes Lady Fanny Harley; how inveterately handsome she looks to-night! I must go pay my devoirs to her. Farewel sweet Julia, depend on my services; whenever you want a titled beau to give you an air of consequence in public, or feel an inclination to stimulate the passion of your lovers by coquetry, I am your most devoted!"

My



My brother and Sophia seemed amazed at this address. Horatio looked as if it had revealed to him a secret. "Perhaps," said he, looking around him, "Lord Revelle has not yet left the room: I wish we could bring him home to sup with us; perhaps if I was to send to his lodgings—"

"Oh no," said I, "by no means—we shall probably see him to-morrow."

Next day, to avoid the mortification of the preceding one, I determined to be at home to every one. I hoped, indeed that Elwood, appeased with the mortification he had already occasioned me, would at length cease to persecute me; but I greatly flattered myself, for as the clock struck eleven, the indefatigable wretch made his appearance. He sat above an hour with me before the arrival of any other visitors, and in that interval amused himself with exciting my anger, by his impertinence, and then turning it into ridicule.

Disgusted at length with his impudence, I arose without ceremony, and telling him I had business, retired to my apartment.

He

He said he would wait my leisure, and taking a book, fixed himself at a front window. It was near an hour before any company came, and I began to hope his patience would be exhausted; but presently afterwards I was recalled to the drawing-room, by the arrival of half the females of my acquaintance, who came almost at the same moment, and seemed to have assembled by general consent. I was utterly at a loss to conceive what this congregation of Belles portended; but observing their "whispers, winks and innuendo's," on finding Lord Elwood with me, I began partly to unravel the mystery. However, I quietly suffered the chits to amuse themselves at my expence, and sat inwardly repining indeed, at being necessitated to submit to the punishment of such society, when my spirits were again thrown into tumult by the entrance of Lord Revell. His air was agitated, and his voice low and unequal.

"Good morning, my Lord," cried Elwood, who leaned against the window with an air of *nonchalance*; "I am happy  
to

“ to see you look so charmingly to-day.—  
“ You appear all wit and vivacity, all fire  
“ and air; the gross elements of earth and  
“ water seem to have no share in your com-  
“ position. May I enquire what has thus  
“ exhilarated you? — the amusements of  
“ Vauxhall last night—a run of luck, or  
“ the smiles of the Goddess of your  
“ idolatry?”

Revell made no reply; but darting at him an indignant glance, seated himself with a sullen air.

“ Was not Vauxhall enchanting last  
“ night?” continued Elwood, addressing Revell.

“ I suppose, my Lord, you found it so;  
“ to me, I acknowledge, no place can be  
“ very delightful in which I am stunned  
“ with folly, and confounded with im-  
“ pertinence.”

“ Oh the polite and obliging declara-  
“ tion!” exclaimed Elwood, laughing  
ironically, “ from which we can draw no  
“ other conclusion than that the ladies of  
“ our party stunned you with their *folly*,  
“ and the Colonel and I confounded you  
“ with our impertinence.” “ That



“ That you, at least, are very capable  
“ of doing so, your present conversation  
“ sufficiently evidences.”

“ How agreeably your Lordship flatters  
“ my talents,” cried Elwood; “ there is  
“ something inveterately elegant in the  
“ turn of your compliment—it is absolutely  
“ egregious !”

Revell turned from him with contempt,  
and addressing me, enquired if the Colonel  
was at home ?

I replied, he was not ; but added, that I  
expected him to dinner.

“ Do stay with us, my Lord,” said El-  
wood ; “ I have been projecting the most  
“ charming party for this evening, and if  
“ I was not apprehensive that the folly and  
“ impertinence you so bitterly complain of,  
“ might recall the violent head-ach, by  
“ which you were annoyed last night—”

“ Your apprehensions are well grounded”  
interrupted Revell ; “ I already experience  
“ their disagreeable consequences ; and as  
“ I fear they may produce similar effects  
“ on the heads of the ladies, in compassion  
“ to them, I shall shorten my visit.”

“ A can-



“ A candid avowal !” cried Elwood ;  
“ indeed I concur in your opinion, that  
“ you cannot possibly adopt a more effica-  
“ cious method of preventing the ladies  
“ from being harrassed with folly and im-  
“ pertinence, than by removing the source  
“ they proceed from.”

“ Not by removing the source they  
“ proceed from,” replied Revell, “ that  
“ is only in the power of your Lordship,  
“ from whose lips they flow, in a torrent  
“ so irresistible, that decency, good manners  
“ and common-sense are entirely borne  
“ down by its impetuosity !”

He left the room without waiting for an answer. I followed him to the door ; he was already on the stairs, but returned on seeing me.

“ My Lord,” said I, half shutting the door, as we stood on the outside of it,  
“ my brother wishes to see you ; we dine  
“ *alone*, and if you could return—”

“ No, Madam,” said he, in apparent confusion, “ not to-day—some other time  
“ perhaps ;—but,” continued he, forcing a smile, “ I ought to congratulate you.—

“ When

“ When I left Ireland, I had the temerity  
“ to hope—but it is now over—and yet I  
“ could wish the person you honour—but  
“ forgive me—if you approve him it is un-  
“ doubtedly sufficient.”

“ Approve whom?” said I; “ you are  
“ strangely—”

“ Oh Madam, this paper will inform  
“ you!” He put a news-paper into my  
hand as he spoke. That malicious fiend  
Elwood came to the door. Revell, at his  
approach hurried down stairs, whilst I stood  
like a statue with the paper in my hand.

“ How now,” cried Elwood; “ what  
“ tender billet-doux has your inflamma-  
“ ble swain presented you? Heavens!  
“ what demon casts a mist before my sight,  
“ is it only a news-paper? The St. James’s  
“ Chronicle—perhaps it contains some pa-  
“ thetic elegy or plaintive sonnet, the off-  
“ spring of his disastrous passion. Come  
“ let’s see.”

He snatched the paper out of my hand,  
and when we re-entered the room, read  
aloud some trifling articles of general in-  
telligence; but if possible, conceive my  
astonish-

astonishment when he came to the following paragraph.

“ The treaty of marriage which has  
“ been so long on the tapis between Lord  
“ El—w—d and Miss Bl—mf—d, of Pall-  
“ Mall, will be concluded in a few weeks.  
“ We cannot be surprized that the attrac-  
“ tive graces of that all amiable fair one,  
“ have triumphed over his Lordship’s  
“ avowed antipathy to the hymeneal chain,  
“ and distinguished predilection to the  
“ sweets of unfettered love.”

“ Lord Elwood,” repeated he; “ yes,  
“ I am undoubtedly the person meant; and  
“ you Miss Bloomfield, are the all-ami-  
“ able fair one, whose attractive graces  
“ have reconciled me to the marriage  
“ chain. O the diabolical calumny! what  
“ demon could have invented it? You  
“ can’t conceive the fatal effects of which  
“ it may be productive—the dissensions it  
“ may occasion—the jealousies it may give  
“ rise to.—But I am determined on an ex-  
“ planation, no less on your account, than  
“ on my own.—The conduct of a certain  
“ person is mysterious — it engenders  
“ strange



“strange suspicions—if he clears not himself to my satisfaction, this sword,” unsheathing it and brandishing it over his head in a perilous rage; —“this sword shall drink his blood!”

So saying, he rushed out of the house, leaving the ladies in a strange consternation, and expiring with curiosity to know the victim devoted to this unquenchable fury. For my part, I easily unravelled the mystery, and instantly discerned that the paragraph he thus violently resented, was entirely the coinage of his own inventive malice; and indeed, I observed as he left the room, he could scarcely suppress his laughter.

When my brother returned, I acquainted him with the transactions of the morning.—If I had permitted him, he would have instantly gone in search of Revell; but that I thought would appear too particular, and as I was to be at a party in the evening, where I knew he was also engaged, I determined to leave our explanation to chance. I went early and staid late. Never did I pass so disagreeable an evening—my head  
ached,



ached, my cards were execrable, I lost my money and returned home without seeing Revell, who kept not his engagement. I passed a sleepless night, and to fill up the measure of my misfortunes, as we were at breakfast next morning received the following note.

“ Lord Revell is extremely sorry, that  
“ an indispensable necessity obliges him to  
“ leave town, without having the honour of  
“ waiting on Col. Bloomfield and his amiable sister. He however flatters himself,  
“ they will not impute this omission to a  
“ want of the warmest gratitude, and the  
“ truest esteem, which on any future occasion it will be his pride and his pleasure  
“ to evince.”

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I looked aghast—my brother said not a word, but taking his hat flew to Revell's lodgings ;—but the bird was flown—he had set out early in the morning, and the people of the house knew not even the place of his destination. I retired to my apartment and was so weak as to dissolve in tears. Sophia came to me—she tenderly enquired the subject

ject of my distress; she took my hand—but recollecting that she had been the cause of Elwood's antipathy to me, and my consequent mortification, I coldly withdrew it, and turned from her. She quitted me in tears. Instantly sensible of my injustice, I followed her.—“ Stay,” cried I, “ my dear  
“ Sophia, my sweet friend! you must not  
“ leave me thus,—there is not in the world  
“ a person whose displeasure would more  
“ deeply affect me.”

“ My displeasure! No, I am too conscious of my own insignificance—it is her  
“ own displeasure, Miss Bloomfield apprehends, too generous to wish me to feel  
“ the weight of obligations which I never  
“ found irksome, till this moment.”

I honour the generous spirit which, nobly indignant, refuses to crouch beneath the frown of a superior! My brother entered.

“ Come, my brother,” said I, “ exert  
“ your influence with our friend, and obtain her forgiveness for your sister; I  
“ have treated her unkindly.”

“ Your offence must have been deep indeed,” replied he, smiling, “ if it requires  
“ quires

“quires my mediation to obtain the forgiveness of a breast so gentle as Sophia’s.”

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The day Revell overtook us on our journey, I seized the first opportunity of a moment’s private conversation, to entreat him not to mention to my brother, Lord Archer’s intended visit to England. — He seemed surprized at this request, but politely acquiesced without any enquiry. You know his unbounded admiration of Lady Archer—my brother listened with delighted avidity to the enthusiastic praises he bestowed on her, and surveyed me at intervals with looks of conscious triumph. He is displeased at my coldness and reserve on this subject, and no longer persecutes me with enquiries, which he perceives I am unwilling to answer. Next week he goes to Hampshire to the wedding of an intimate friend, and speaks of going to the South of France, to spend the season of the vintage after his return. If the latter project takes place, I shall be at liberty to accept Lady Archer’s invitation, which would give me great pleasure.

You



You see what all your oracles are come to —never again whilst you live, set up for a prophetess.

You will probably endeavour to comfort me with the trite reflection, that “virtue is its own reward.” But I am a perverse being —I don’t love to be pitied—nor could ever derive any satisfaction from those consolatory discourses. Besides, I am angry with myself for being vexed at this little incident; and hope, that before I receive your letter, I shall be able to forget it entirely.

JULIA BLOOMFIELD.



END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



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FIELD.